

The Witch

in the
WESTERN
IMAGINATION

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LYNDAL ROPER

THE WITCH IN THE WESTERN IMAGINATION

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RICHARD LECTURES FOR 1998

The Witch

IN THE WESTERN IMAGINATION

• *Lyndal Roper* •

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For Charles Zika,

WHO SHOWED ME
HOW TO LOOK

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Acknowledgments

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THE WITCH IN THE WESTERN IMAGINATION

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Introduction

THIS COLLECTION of essays examines one particular cultural theme which had special importance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that of the figure of the witch. I began assembling it shortly after I had written a book on the witch craze in southern Germany between 1560 and 1800, based on hundreds of trial records from some of the areas of most intense witch-hunting. The book argues that the European witch hunt was fired by an obsession with the power of old women to destroy fertility in the human and the natural world, and it includes a great many pictures.¹ It explores how episodes like these reveal the power of unconscious forces in particular historical epochs, driving hatreds and anxieties of a peculiarly intense kind. The European witch hunt claimed the lives of perhaps as many as fifty thousand to one hundred thousand individuals — we will never know the exact total. In mass panics like some of those I investigated, more than a thousand people met their deaths in the space of a generation; and even where witch-hunting remained comparatively restrained, there might be one or two cases which led to trials of extraordinary viciousness against apparently harmless individuals, old women, or even children.

Though the book is richly illustrated, I was not able to discuss these often extremely beautiful images, which were difficult to relate to the harrowing details of the trials. Yet fundamentally, witchcraft is concerned with fantasy, and it produced some of the most important works of art of the period, from the witches of Dürer and Baldung Grien to the dramas of Marlowe or Goethe.² But the images of witches that I constantly encountered could not be corralled into a conventional historical explanation of the witch hunt. For a start, the most vivid of them were produced a good fifty years before the era of intense witch-hunting of the later sixteenth century. For another thing, as works of fantasy and imagination, these images did not always express an attitude of condemnation of witchcraft.³ They were erotic, they were beautiful,

they were funny, or they turned the witch into a heroine. What then was the relationship between the witch in history and the figure of the witch who pervaded the Western imagination?

As a historian interested in gender and in psychoanalysis, I wanted to bring the investigation of subjectivity into history, that is, to explore how individuals experience social processes. This I hoped would create a richer account of what motivated people in the epoch of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation: their unconscious as well as their conscious motivations; their dreams and imaginings about witchcraft as well as their overt moralizing against it. But it is not easy to provide a psychoanalytically informed cultural history, or to set out a program of what it should include.⁴ The path I have taken has been intuitive, led more by what seemed not to fit into the familiar historical account of witchcraft than by any particular theory. In this introduction I shall try to articulate the approach I adopted over the writing of these chapters, and explain what connects material on Rubens and his Marie de Medici cycle, to a study of the emotion of envy in art, or to a microhistorical vignette of an unknown village woman from the tiny town of Marchtal in a backwater of rural southern Germany.

I began by finding as many images of witches as possible, in literature and in art, so as to establish the sheer range of the contexts in which they appeared. Visual sources are not intrinsically different in kind from literary ones in this respect. Both, we might say, are “textual” in that they function according to a series of signs. The first step in understanding an image is to establish its iconography and the history of its use, the corpus of the artist’s work, and his or her habitual lexicon of images, just as, for literary works, we need to know about the author, the kinds of material he or she usually writes, their style.⁵ So for instance, when Peter Flötner depicts Fortune with an impossibly huge hat, her skirt riding up to show her private parts, he is portraying her as a prostitute; but we also need to know that he is referring to Dürer’s famous etching of Fortune, Nemesis, standing astride the globe. Fortune, says Flötner wryly, is a whore. The Devil who cavorts on the chalice she holds aloft hints at witchcraft — here the reference is oblique, for this buxom wench certainly does not look like a witch — and it works by linking one kind of loose woman with another.⁶

But it was not only artists who made play with visual references: viewers of all kinds also saw and understood images in the context of images they knew already. These connections contributed to how the witch became culturally significant, in literature as well as art. Stuart

Clark's study of the demonology of the early modern period has demonstrated that the figure of the witch became so ubiquitous, invoked not just in treatises devoted to witchcraft but in sermons, moral literature, scientific studies (and, one might add, works of theater, poetry, masques, and entertainment), that it makes little sense to demarcate "demonology" as a distinct genre.⁷ Charles Zika's masterly study of the images of witches in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries has shown just how widespread depictions of witches were.⁸ The witch was compelling because she was symbolically and psychologically capacious. Never one thing, she was several different beings at once, and she invaded many areas of thinking and writing, accruing new associations and new layers of meaning as she did so. For example, as the essay on Envy in this volume argues, the images of old, hag-like witches with hanging breasts and unbound hair looked strikingly like representations of the figure of Envy. The visual similarities underlined the conviction (which demonological theorists also shared) that envy was the root of witchcraft. In turn, the artistic association of witchcraft and envy greatly strengthened the tendency to regard the stereotypical witch as an old woman.⁹

The witch was a key imaginative figure for artists like Albrecht Dürer, or for Hans Baldung Grien, who produced images of witches throughout his life. Yet a cultural history cannot stop at the study of an individual artist. Artists form part of a generation, and images were then, as they are now, inherently mobile, replicated in different media and altered and copied by one artist after another. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries witnessed the rapid growth of a huge and commercial world of artifacts: from furniture, to crockery, majolica ware, cutlery, clothes, weapons, and saddlery, most of them home-produced, some of them imported from the New World or from Asia.¹⁰ Many of these objects were designed by artists and craftsmen, and their surfaces were covered in images, using the very same patterns and motifs that we know from high art and from printing. Images of the virtues in female form, for example, could be found etched in sword hilts, as reliefs on homely pitchers, on humble house tiles, or they might adorn those extraordinary tiled German heating ovens that took pride of place in any parlor. Civic buildings from town halls to town gates could be decorated outside or inside with elaborate programs of visual imagery that featured well-known classical myths, virtues, and emblems. Woodcuts could be used not just for book illustrations or as works of art but to decorate furniture or as playing cards. Even those apparently trivial decorative borders

found on the frontispieces of books made a design statement.¹¹

Routinely, artists produced designs for household objects: Peter Flötner created patterns for jewelry, for ornamental urns, for gaming boards, or for fantastical four-poster beds — he included a self-portrait in a wood-cut of one of these. There slumps the artist on the edge of a grandiose architectural bed, with preposterous niches and classical urns, receiving his pay from the patron.¹² These bed designs were woodcuts: Were they intended as fantasy objects or as real patterns? If his design for a “Venetian bed” was copied from a plate in the *Dream of Porphylius* of 1499, it is at least practical: you can buy a Flötner-designed bed today online, hand-carved by craftsmen and “at an affordable price.”¹³ Nor was he alone: Cranach’s workshop painted the marital bed of John the Steadfast. More mundanely, it even produced a gingerbread mold.¹⁴ But any craftsmen who tried to execute the extraordinary mannerist ewer designed by Salviati — with its satyrs, classical motifs, and its handle in the shape of a naked woman which you must fondle to pour — would find that this vessel would simply not stand up. This was a mannerist fancy, not a functional design.¹⁵ Just as artists did not stick to one medium, so we also must explore culture with an eye to how images were linked across a whole world of visual, material culture. Fantasy and imagination were not the preserve of high art alone, but pervaded the style of everyday objects lower down the social scale, too. And if the Flötner bed was beyond your purse, the woodcut was not.

This means expanding our sense of what the visual includes. Just as literary scholars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have made us think not only about texts by “great” writers but about lottery advertisements, letters, and legal and regulatory writing, so also we need to think about everything that was produced with an eye to style. Clothing, for example, as Ulinka Rublack has argued, is one of the most important social forms of design. It expressed social differentiation, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, elaborate printed sumptuary legislation regulated in detail what every class might wear, from patrician to commoner. It also expressed sexual difference, and eroticized the body. Garments have color, shape, and feel. The use of color, for example, in court livery, is carefully reproduced in Cranach’s painting *David and Bathsheba*, where the court women who surround her are all attired in identical luxurious red velvet. The Saxon dukes spent a small fortune each season on buying cloth for court members and important individuals; and Cranach himself received an allocation of cloth in two colors, from which he could have the prescribed costume made up.¹⁶ So

when Cranach dresses Susanna's companions in livery, he sets the familiar Old Testament story in present-day Saxony, a devotional act of imaginative identification with the biblical past. Cranach knew what it was to wear livery: so many of his oil paintings and woodcuts bear the coat of arms of the dukes for whom he worked as court painter, the emblems proclaiming that the paintings, like Cranach himself, belong to the Saxon house.

It is obvious that material objects and their uses need to be part of cultural history; but we need to go further, and include, for example, the landscape itself as part of the visual field. For instance, I could not understand the trial of a seventeenth-century suicidal student who made a pact with the Devil until I realized that he traversed a patch of southern Germany between Augsburg and Ingolstadt, a baroque landscape that was dotted with shrines and wayside crosses. Schooled by the Jesuits, but expelled for his criminal activities, he could shake off neither his Catholic faith nor his conviction that he was lost to the Devil, and he wandered from town to town, engaging in petty thefts and seeking deliverance from his pact. Each of those towns had its own Jesuit foundation, their new architecture creating an imposing, classicizing vision of order and justice that could not have been further from the young man's rootless uncertainty about his faith and his identity.

Journeys featured, too, in the stories of witches' flight, as they described how the witches moved from one site of malefice to another, raiding cellars or riding cattle at night. When village witches confessed to flying to sabbaths, the settings they described were often little more than local landmarks: for example, witches from the region around the Federsee flew no farther than to the nearby hills that lowered above the flat lands by the lake, revealing the narrowness of their geographical imagination. In central Germany, witches flew to the Brocken in the Harz for their sabbaths, and the mountain itself became a byword for witchcraft throughout Germany: it features in Goethe's *Faust* as the backdrop for the famous sabbath scene. The wildness of mountains and deserted landscapes such as these in turn became part of the iconography of witchcraft. They form the backgrounds in de Gheyn's haunting sketches of witches, and they feature, too, in the atmospheric watercolors that Goethe painted of witch scenes years before he wrote *Faust*.¹⁷ In the spectral, Romantic landscapes of nineteenth-century painters like Caspar David Friedrich, landscape itself moved to the foreground, becoming the subject of the image.¹⁸

And as belief in witchcraft declined, the stories about witches became

part of the folklore attached to particular places. In the late-seventeenth-century descriptions of the Brocken, we read of magical hoards of silver hidden in the slopes of the uncanny mountain, clouded in mist. Such examples suggest how important it is to consider elite and popular culture as a totality, for it was popular belief as it emerged in the interrogations of witches that provided the material for demonologists writing about the witches' sabbath and, in turn, for the ideas that came to be classed as "folklore" in the work of writers like Eberhard Happel. As the first chapter in this volume, "Witchcraft in the Western Imagination," argues, these baroque authors wrote for a popular readership, and they described the Brocken not as the real haunt of witches, but as a landscape of the strange and mysterious. Their massive volumes, the forerunners of the German novel, deliberately set out to provide amusement for the reader.

The qualities of images, such as color, shape, placement, and organization, aspects which historians feel less equipped to analyze, are also part of the visual field and its impact. It is perhaps not surprising that early modernists should first have been drawn to the study of woodcuts — they seem to be images poised on the border between elite and popular, they lack color, they are not always the preserve of high art and of art historians, they are linked with the technology of print and writing, and they often have an associated text, with which the historian feels more comfortable. But even the poorest woodcut in terms of artistic standards still has visual qualities, and it is important not to think we can derive the meaning of an image from a text, however much certainty this seems to offer. For example, the huge fold-out image by Jan Ziarnko that adorns the second edition of Pierre de Lancre's treatise on witches looks like a precise illustration of the words of the text: it even has a key which identifies every motif in the image (see [fig. 1.1](#)). But it is the structure of the whole sabbath picture — the puzzling insertion of a band of chubby children fishing in a diabolic pond, the cascade of upturned bodies, the women's dresses flying up to reveal their naked legs, and the visual disorganization of the image with its multiple viewpoints and sense of movement — that reveals this as a work of imagination, not just a worthy illustration to a treatise. Working on this picture as I wrote the first chapter in this collection transformed my view of de Lancre's extraordinary text, making me see it, too, as a baroque work of art, deploying literary techniques to flood the reader with a welter of emotions. Witchcraft had moved into the realm of the aesthetic, becoming part of a literature that self-consciously set out to enthrall the

reader.

...

SO HOW SHOULD historians use images? We might do what has become habitual and follow the dictates of the linguistic turn, starting from the axiom that each sign has meaning only in relation to others, and analyzing witchcraft as a discourse with its own internal rules, a structure which organized subjectivities, regardless of its relation to “reality.” Yet if the visual turn proceeds in the same way as the linguistic turn, we will arrive at the same dead end to which discursive analysis has brought us already. The linguistic turn analyzed texts as systems of signs which made sense only in discourses, but it ceased to generate new knowledge because every discursive analysis began to produce predictable results. In the case of witchcraft, it seemed to make us think of witchcraft as a totalizing discourse, from which there could be no escape, a world of contrarities where witchcraft made sense as a series of inversions. But although this explained its ubiquity, and got around the question of its reality, it did not explain the hold witchcraft had on fantasy, why it should prove so compelling to early modern Europeans, and why it should drive people to send neighbors and fellow villagers they knew well to the stake. Much of the work in these essays was driven by my discomfort with the way discourse analysis of witchcraft has limited and distorted our understanding of the emotional compulsion of the figure of the witch. The images of witchcraft themselves, moreover, seemed to dictate a different way of looking. It felt unsatisfactory to stop at just identifying the roles that images can play in systems of visual signs, for this would be to leave out of account what it was that made images of witchcraft disturbing. Witches represented a deep existential threat, so profound that those who feared their attacks were convinced that unless witches were eliminated, their very physical and emotional survival was at risk. This sense of utter menace pervades so many of these terrifying images of snake-haired hags: Why?

If discourse analysis will not provide a framework, the work of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz might seem to offer a way forward, because it is based on a richer understanding of culture, one that is related to social action. Through what Geertz has termed “thick description” of a cultural fragment, we can illuminate, he argues, the essential core of a culture. Such an approach seems especially suited to the historical use of images because it treats actions as cultural forms, or,

one might even say, as a species of moving image. This process works the other way around, too: pictures can be analyzed as encapsulations of social actions and practices. Indeed, in an article from 1976, Geertz does exactly that. Contrasting Yoruba sculpture with the art of Matisse, he subjects both equally to “thick description,” treating them not as objects for aesthetic delectation but as cultural productions on the same level that shed light on an entire cultural world, for “to study an art form is to explore a sensibility,” and “such a sensibility is essentially a collective formation.”¹⁹

In this article, Geertz draws heavily on the work of Michael Baxandall on the “period eye” of the Italian Renaissance, a concept that has been immensely fruitful for historians and art historians in suggesting how the two disciplines could come together. Analyzing what the movement of bodies in Botticelli’s paintings owes to dance, to the slow, majestic *bassa danza* in particular, or how della Francesca’s art fits a culture where merchants had to be well versed in calculating quantities from the geometry of containers, Baxandall shows how the audience in Renaissance Italy brought skills from elsewhere to bear in looking at art. The connections Baxandall makes between areas of life that are normally considered to have nothing to do with art are truly mind-opening. Knowing, for instance, that Piero della Francesca also wrote a treatise on mathematical methods for merchants really does make one understand his art differently.

But it is less clear that Baxandall’s “period eye” can serve as the model for a wider cultural history in the Geertzian manner, for as Baxandall says: “One is talking not about all fifteenth-century people, but about those whose response to works of art was important to the artist — the patronizing classes, one might say. In effect this means rather a small proportion of the population: mercantile and professional men acting as members of confraternities or as individuals, princes and their courtiers, the senior members of religious houses.”²⁰ This is unlikely to get us far in pursuing the social meanings of images of witches, let alone in thinking about gender. It is difficult, too, to be sure what skills contemporary individuals deployed — and when the connections the historian makes are arbitrary or simply overstretched. (How do we know which images invoked such practical mathematical knowledge? Or when the viewers’ experience of dancing as opposed to some other form of movement colored their understanding of paintings? Why should geometrical skill offer the key to viewing and not, say, knowledge of the processes of birth? And how would any of this determine the meaning

and emotional impact of the image?) Baxandall proposes a cultural history that offers insight into the cognitive practices of the Renaissance, but his fusion of history and art history ultimately remains trapped in the paradigm from which he started, the study of the relation between patron and client, the traditional preserve of history for art historians.

Furthermore, there is something troubling about Geertz's concept of culture itself as he famously applies it to the Balinese cockfight. When Geertz claims to go to the heart of Balinese culture through his study of the cockfight, the skeptical feminist wants to know what the women made of their menfolk's obsession with fighting cocks.²¹ Whether it be the outcast characters on the margins, making bets on the cockfight that do not accord with what Geertz lauds as the central values of Balinese culture, or the women whose voices we do not hear, Geertz's cultural analysis presupposes a community with a single, shared vision. He takes us back to the cultural essentialism of nineteenth-century cultural history, to the kind of cultural history that postmodernists and feminists critiqued in the 1980s. And he leaves little space for individual subjectivity, or for divisions of sex and power within communities.

The new cultural history does not require that we treat culture as having a single essence. The price of a holistic view of culture should not be that we settle for a single, simplistic vision. Rather, we can explore the diverse and contradictory nature of culture, its repressions and elisions, and the conflicts to which it gave expression. All the artists and writers whose work I examine in this collection were men, just as those who held political power in the myriad tiny communities of southern Germany were all male. Men and women probably did not view these pictures of witches in the same ways. Should we therefore argue that images of witches created and enjoyed by men fueled the witch hunt against women? Comforting as it would be to think that women did not adopt the beliefs about witchcraft, too many of them testified against their neighbors for that to be true. Many more women were ready to point the finger at others than were ever accused of witchcraft; and men as well as women could find themselves accused of witchcraft. All the same, we do not have to assume that all Europeans were obsessed in the same way by the figure of the witch, or that their emotional preoccupations were at fever pitch throughout the period.

In this collection, essays about high art sit alongside essays on the subjectivity of obscure individuals, because unless we can see how beliefs and images can take root in the unconscious of individuals, we will have only the most sketchy cultural analysis, a "mining" of the depths of

culture in which people — who, after all, are the ones who absorb, make, and transform culture — do not exist. This is not to say that there are only individuals, and no psychological patterns in societies of the past — far from it. One of the most effective attacks on microhistory is that it descends into entertaining stories about exotic individuals which are in the end no more than anecdote — and about characters who are boring to boot.²² When microhistory is animated only by the archives and ceases to ask wider questions, it does indeed become desiccated and antiquarian. Its life springs from its capacity to illuminate culture and psychology through reconstructing the subjectivities of individuals; and for that, it requires a theory — implicit or explicit — about how individuals relate to society. We seem to be stuck on the horns of a dilemma: To say that such individuals are “typical” of society in general vitiates the entire purpose of microhistory, which is to unpick the crude psychologizing about society as a whole; yet to insist they are unique risks losing the usefulness of microstudies for history altogether.

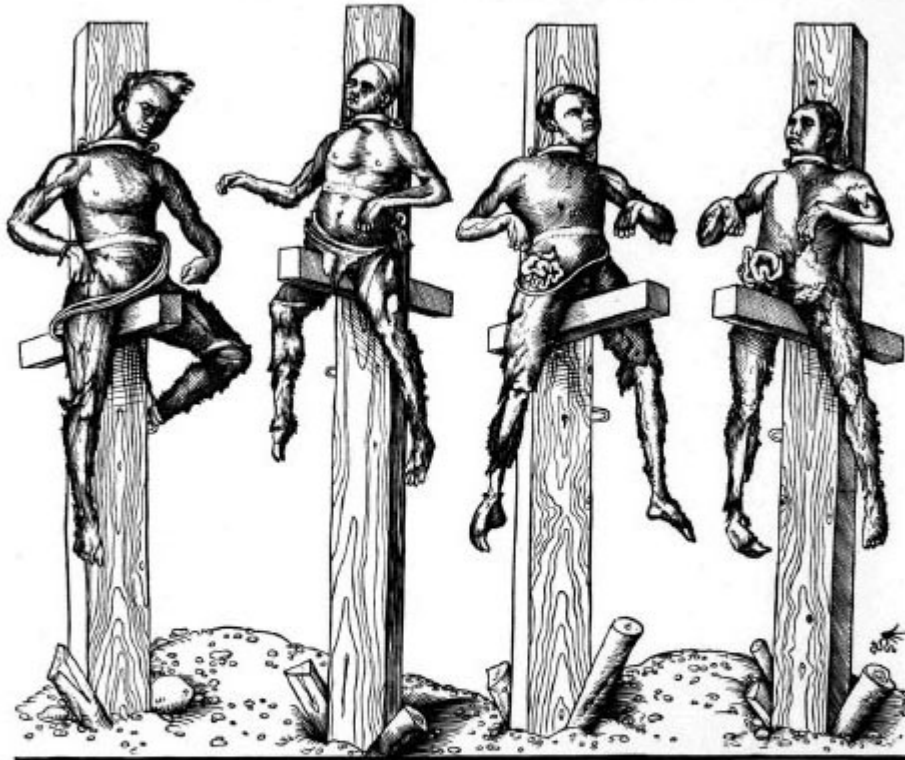
But we do not have to make a choice here, for while individuals are unique, they are also formed by wider social, cultural, and psychological forces. Humans share basic constitutional and physiological features, and they interact with each other, sometimes forming friendships, sometimes generating hatreds. Of course they will not all be formed in the same way by such forces, nor will they always be susceptible to them in the same measure: sometimes people in sixteenth-century villages feared witches; at other times, they did not. Nevertheless, we can identify the unconscious fears, dreams, and fantasies that moved them, and so attempt a cultural analysis that also explores how individuals made sense of witchcraft, why the figure of the witch could arouse such intense emotion, and why she could be used in so many different ways. This is why this book considers the figure of the witch in culture in tandem with case studies of individuals.

Just as not all areas of Europe hunted witches all the time, so also, not all artists and writers shared the era’s obsession with witchcraft. A comparison of the work of Cranach with that of Dürer and Hans Baldung Grien serves to illustrate this point. They were contemporaries, and yet their attitude to the female body could not have been more different. Baldung manages to convey both the attraction and the devastation of the female body as it ages, a subject to which he was repeatedly drawn. As Joseph Koerner has persuasively argued, Baldung used images of witchcraft to portray his own psychic identity: his nickname “Grien” may well refer to “Grien Hans,” the name women gave to their diabolic lover.

In a brilliant interpretation of Baldung's last work, *The Bewitched Stable Groom*, Koerner shows that this image is not just about witchcraft or the evil of female sexuality, but about perspective, the possibility of representation of the self, and about his debt to his teacher, Dürer.²³ Baldung, we might say, uses his ambivalence toward the female body as the forum for working out his own identity. Indeed, his creativity springs from his tortured attitude toward women's bodies, and his fascinated disgust is concentrated in his pitiless depictions of old women witches.

There are, by contrast, relatively few depictions of witchcraft in the output of the Cranach workshop. In the background of his four depictions of Melancholia, based on Dürer's treatment of the same subject, tiny diabolic goats and witches fly through the air in a Wild Ride, an exotic scene framed by a window; but these are exceptions.²⁴ Nymphs and Venuses are the vehicles for the eroticism of the Cranach workshop, and their women's flesh is ethereal, glowing but flat; they do not possess the erotic complexities of Baldung Grien's or Altdorfer's satanic harpies. There is, however, one extraordinary image of witches that Cranach the Younger produced: a woodcut purporting to offer a realistic depiction of the executions of four witches at Wittenberg, warning the viewer of the perils of consorting with the Devil ([fig. I.1](#)). Yet the image of the four figures on their cross-like pillars, their guts hanging out and their skins peeling, deliberately eschews any erotic possibility that the naked torso of the fifty-year-old witch might offer. It is disturbingly reminiscent of the Cranachs' own depictions of the crucifixion.²⁵ Here text and image could not be more at odds: the text excoriates the evils of witchcraft; the image almost hints that their sufferings might be oblations to God.

Paul. zum Rom. XIII. Die Gewaltigen oder Oberkeiten
 sind nicht den die gutes / sunder den die böses thun / zu fürchten / Denn sie
 treget das Schwert nicht vmb sonst / Sie ist Gottes diene-
 rin / eine Racherin vber den der böses thut.



Und viele vnd mancherliche böse misseethaten willen / sind diese vier Personen / also abgemalt / am tage Petri Pauli mit feuer gerech-
 fertigt worden zu Wittenberg / Anno .i. 5. 40. Als nemlich ein alte Weib vber .50. jar / mit irem Son / der sich etwan dem Teufel er-
 geben / In sonderheit aber das Weib / welches mit dem Teufel gebulet / mit im zugehalten / etliche jar / Zauberen getrieben / Wetter ge-
 macht / vnd auffgehalten / vnd zu mercklichen vieler armer Leute schaden vergift / Puluer gemacht / auch daselbige andere zumachen
 geteueret / damit allerlei Viehsteele / durch sie vnd ire drey missethater vergift / dadurch ein onzeliche menge Viehes von Ochsen / Kühen /
 Schweinen etc. an vielen orten nider gefelt / welche sie darnach geschunden vnd abgedeckt / dadurch iren boshaftigen / verzeuflischen
 geist vmb eines kleinen nutz willen gefertigt / Und ist diese abhungerung alleine darumb geschehen / Die weil der selbigen schelischen
 Ketten noch viel vnd mehr im Land / als etliche von Bettlern / Schindern / Henslers knechten / auch Hirten / vmb lauffen / zu abscheten /
 vnd das ein ißliche Oberkeit flüssiges auffsehen beselle / dadurch armer Leute schaden vorhut werden möge / Gott der allmächtige
 behüte alle Christliche herren / vor des Teufels listigen anschlegen vnd ansechtungen / Amen.

Psal. LXXXIII. Sie machen listige anschlege wider
 dein volck / Vnd ratschlagen wider deine verborgene.

FIG. I.1. Cranach the Younger, *Four Executed Witches*, 1540. Woodcut, 345 × 268 mm. (From *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, 2:639; by permission of Abaris Books)

As David Freedberg argued long ago, art historians and historians deny the emotional power of imagery at their peril.²⁶ There is more to using images than iconography: we need also to think about why it is that images can elicit an emotional response, both in us and in contemporaries. When sixteenth-century people “saw” a witch, they didn’t just respond to the image by decoding it, using the benefit of their classical education to identify the figure as Envy, Circe, or Medea. Rather, they responded to the element of danger and of evil that the figure summons up. Freedberg provocatively argues that we, too, must take into account the emotional response that the image can arouse, going so far as to demand that we step back for a moment from “art” as an object of academic veneration. There are times, he suggests, when

formal analysis can get in the way of considering images *as images*. Sometimes we need to allow art to move us. (Indeed, the emotional responses that the study of the past occasionally elicits in us are similarly not something to be suppressed, but can rather form part of historical analysis itself. If we can establish why a particular record of interrogation stays in the mind, disturbing the scholarly equanimity that usually separates us from our objects of study, we might be able to discern something of its emotional dynamic.) As Freedberg points out, we cannot understand why sixteenth-century religious radicals wanted to smash crucifixes or deface statues of Mary unless we consider the capacity of the image to arouse devotional emotions.

Freedberg develops his theory in relation to erotic and religious emotions. But there are more emotional categories than these, and this is nowhere clearer than in images of witches. The image of the witch in the work of artists like Hans Baldung Grien might look like a mere excuse for sexual voyeurism: his naked witches offer calculatedly different views of the female body from a variety of angles and in a range of poses. But they also invoke the strange and uncanny. Cats and toads cluster around the edges of the pictures, and there is little sense of space in these menacing images. Even more striking, the young women witches are balanced by old women, whose haggard faces and sagging breasts mock the firm buttocks and breasts of the young. If this is erotic art, “titillation” is inadequate to describe the images’ effect.

To convey to us “secular moderns” the emotional response that religious imagery must have elicited, Freedberg confronts us with erotic art where our response is immediate. The comparison is shocking: Freedberg uses it to make the point that in relation to erotic art, we have not lost our emotional response to images, though we no longer have it for religious art. This comparison, however, rests on a certain sleight of hand, for he assumes that emotional response to erotic art does not vary widely across history. But as Freedberg himself points out, historical distance is precisely what can make it difficult for those of us who have grown up in a secular culture to understand the religious response. So also, the erotic response to which Freedberg appeals depends on which picture you choose: most modern viewers would find it much harder to respond erotically to the sensuality of the overwhelming fleshiness of a Rubens nude. These women just look fat.

On the other hand, the coyness of the Cranach nudes, with their prepubescent slender figures and their gleaming limbs, elicits an eroticism in which the woman, perched weightlessly on a lunar

landscape, her concave chest barely able to allow her to breathe, is an object to possess rather than an active individual. To describe such different forms of art as “erotic” is only the first step. Here the consideration of pictorial traditions must still form part of our analysis, for the emotional response a picture elicits is also conditioned by the history of how people see, that is, by the associations they bring from the images that are part of their mental furniture. Writing for an academic audience just coming to terms with feminist theory, Freedberg readily assumes that the viewer of the erotic image is male, and while he is uncomfortable with this, ruefully admitting later in the book that Western art may inevitably enshrine a masculinist point of view, he does not think that the nature of the viewer’s response demands further analysis. Yet precisely what is interesting here is the question of why and how the female body should have become such an eroticized object of viewing in the art of the early sixteenth century.

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THE FIGURE OF the witch in art drew on two main sources that came together at the beginning of the sixteenth century: an interest in the nude, and the rediscovery of the classics.²⁷ This legacy structured the particular type of eroticism she offered. Classical culture proved a treasure trove for those interested in witches because it offered a host of imaginative possibilities, of ambiguities, fantastic creatures, and murderous passions. The humanist revival of classical culture, enshrined in the next generation in the more humdrum curricula of Jesuit and Protestant civic Latin schools, meant that a male upper and middling class had a set of shared cultural reference points. These set them apart from others who lacked Latinity. In emblem books, in autograph collections, and in the elaborate programs they drew up to decorate civic buildings like town halls and patrician dance parlors, artists were able to use this lexicon of classical knowledge as a currency of exchange and of display.

The Bible has few witches or enchantresses, but classical culture is full of them, sorceresses like Medea and Circe, or fearsome Gorgons like Medusa. Even those artists who, like Albrecht Dürer or Elias Holl, may have missed out on a full Latin education, knew friends who were only too willing to share their iconographic knowledge. And gradually translations of Ovid appeared: Jörg Wickram’s German printed version of the *Metamorphoses* was published in 1545, soon to become plagiarized by

the likes of the Nuremberg poet Hans Sachs. In the process, sixteenth-century popularizers subtly changed classical culture's values, as they gave them a Christian overlay. Nevertheless, the space that the classical heritage opened up created room for imagination and for play which biblical culture had never offered.

The beginning of the sixteenth century also witnessed the rise of the female nude in the art of northern Europe. These were not the first such depictions, but nude female bodies became acceptable and widespread in art as they had not been before. And they were shocking. It is hard now to imagine the impact of Altdorfer's full-length image *Lot and His Daughter*, the vast panel glowing with her luminescent flesh, set off against her father's darker, lascivious body; or how Cranach's contemporaries might have responded to his huge Venuses, as big as the viewer himself.²⁸ The classical allusions in paintings like these gave an alibi, so that these images, destined for the private rooms of princes and dukes, could be licitly enjoyed — as evocations of a superior classical past. These were images quite unlike nakedness as it had been presented in religious contexts — we might compare here the Virgin's bared breast as she feeds the Christ child, a staple of medieval and Renaissance imagery, which conveys a religious meaning. In this new carnival of female flesh, it was especially women's hips, buttocks, and stomachs that fascinated artists like Dürer, perhaps because the Virgin's breasts were so familiar.²⁹ The images of naked witches would have been unthinkable without the revolution in the acceptability of the female nude. Artists like Altdorfer and Baldung took this sexual theme a stage further when they played with sexual perversion and with sadism — with candles in anuses, with the idea of flight (then, as now, a metaphor for sexual abandon),³⁰ and with dismembering and cooking human bodies.

Why should the bodies of women have become the focus of these projections about evil, sexuality, envy, and death? Why did these images have such deep emotional power, rooting themselves in the psyches of so many individual men and women? Psychoanalysis may help us here, because it would locate this in the relationship with the mother, which is the source of creativity as well as the relationship in which we most risk dissolution and death. We find our first identity as we gradually separate from the mother, and it is in relationship to her that the infant first feels murderous rage and aggression; and first tries to make reparation through offerings of love, or to put it in other words, through engaging in creation. This is why envy stalks creativity, as it seeks to destroy what it cannot produce itself — an insight of which, as discussed in [chapter 4](#),

seventeenth-century emblem makers were acutely aware, illustrating Envy as Love's twin. One chilling representation of this truth portrays a plump Cupid, whose shadow is the snake-haired gaunt body of Envy ([fig. 1.2](#)). The intimation of the close connection between envy and creativity is also why, as discussed in [chapter 3](#), northern artists were drawn to the story of the artist Apelles, who was calumniated by those who envied his skill; and why they increasingly began to represent the figure of Invidia in the tale not as a male figure but as a woman.

The figure of the witch gives form to the deepest fears a society can have about motherhood, because she embodies the envious woman who devours children and destroys fertility. These terrors focused on her body. In Christian art, Mary's beautiful nourishing breast is ubiquitous. As Margaret Miles has argued, in the sixteenth century Mary's breast, for centuries a religious symbol of immense unifying power, lost its primacy. Mariolatry was challenged by Protestants, who saw in Mary not a figure of feminine sacred power who could intercede with Christ, but an earthly woman who was a pattern for all Christians, male or female. One of the religious subjects to which the Protestant Cranach workshop was drawn was Christ's injunction "Let the children come to me." Nothing could better illustrate the loss of the exclusive place once accorded to Mary's breast as a religious symbol than the Cranach workshop's artwork crammed with breasts and chubby nursing babies. And breasts could also be disturbing: what is disconcerting about Baldung's witches is that he shows young, buxom women alongside the shriveled bosoms of old hags. As [chapter 4](#) argues, the dried-out breast of the old woman with its virile hard teat became a powerful visual motif, expressing the evil of witchcraft and envy rolled into one.^{[31](#)}



FIG. I.2. *Amoris umbra invidia*. From Otto Vaenius, *Amorum emblata* (Antwerp, 1608). (The Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford [Douce V 83, fol. 51r])

And yet the figure of the witch was always more than this. Despite her association with evil, she could be morally ambiguous. She was carnivalesque, but she belonged to elite culture, too. As Charles Zika has shown, she derived, after all, from the classical figures of antiquity, passed on through the reading of Ovid and Lucian, rather than from popular culture alone. She permitted a host of complex emotional responses: fear, loathing, dread, but also allure and fascination. Medea, Circe, or the Gorgons, each offered a different version of what a witch could be. In Augsburg, to my surprise, I found images that even celebrated the witch: hags with sagging breasts and snakelike hair who had saved the city from invaders, or beautiful civic heroines who were also sorceresses (these are discussed in [chapter 2](#), “The Gorgon of Augsburg”). An artist like Tobias Stimmer could employ Circe to make a simple moral point on the mural of a house: like all whores, she must be driven away, for she turns men into pigs; a fitting moral for the town house of an upright Schaffhausen burgher.³² But alchemists used the figure of Circe without any opprobrium whatsoever: for them, the enchantress was an allegory of metamorphosis, of chemical transformation.³³

MANY OF THE images of witches that interested me were not, however, representations where witchcraft was the main subject. What caught my eye were witches in corners of images, in the background where one would not expect them. So, for example, the extraordinary huge rosary sculpted by the workshop of Veit Stoss on the eve of the Reformation contains a hag-like figure down in Hell, who opens her bowels into the mouth of another damned soul. There is a fine irony here, as the ultimate evil woman is tucked away at the bottom of an image which glorifies the Virgin herself. While the Virgin is honored as the woman who gave birth to Christ, this hag can only defecate.³⁴

In a similar juxtaposition, Rubens includes witchlike figures at the edges of his monumental series honoring Marie de Medici, Queen Regent of France. This huge cycle describes all the key episodes of the queen's life and was a massive commission with major political significance ([fig. I.3](#)). Yet behind this allegorical celebration of the triumphs of the reign, there lurks a hag-like figure ([fig. I.4](#)). Rubens portrays her muscular body, her dangling breasts, snakelike hair, and powerful raised forearm in an almost conscious act of homage to the German masters of the sixteenth century like Dürer or Hans Baldung Grien. Her dark skin contrasts sharply with the luminous white flesh of the fertile woman to her left, and she glowers in the back of the picture space, with a torch — symbol of female lubricity — between her legs.³⁵



FIG. I.3. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Council of the Gods*. From the *Rule of Marie de Medici* cycle, The Louvre, Paris. (Scala/Art Resource, NY)



FIG. I.4. Detail of [fig. I.3](#) showing the woman on the far right. (Scala/Art Resource, NY)

Witchlike figures such as this one characteristically resist definitive identification. Is she an allegory of Envy or a Fury, or just a hag? Art historians disagree. Such disputes are in any case beside the point, for what makes her artistically powerful is her ambiguity. She possesses a disturbing capacity to evoke not a safe, classical past, but a real diabolic danger. This is what lends the image drama, and enables it to arouse disgust, dread, or fear. Ostensibly the paintings glorify Marie de Medici, who as regent of France conquered faction and division, represented by the three allegorical figures. But the allegory of Envy also uncomfortably reminds the viewer that Marie de Medici was herself an old woman by the time the picture was commissioned.^{[36](#)}

Why were witches depicted in marginal places, on the edges of images? In *Image on the Edge*, Michael Camille explores the function of marginalia in medieval manuscripts.^{[37](#)} As he brilliantly shows, such marginalia create manuscripts which do not have a single meaning, and so must be read ironically as well as devotionally. Alongside the devotional text of one medieval book of hours, for example, monkeys and strange beasts cavort, and there is even a naked couple, his head near her vagina, while behind him a gigantic beaked bird attacks the man's anus.

Camille speculates that the man is diving back into the womb, in what he terms an “anti-illustration” of the words of the psalm below: “this man and that man were born in you. The habitation of all delights is within you.” Illuminations, he argues, offer a self-conscious countertext, which can be understood only when, as Camille does, we look at the confusing plethora of strange beings that are literally placed in the margins.³⁸

With the rise of the Renaissance, Camille claims, this technique of representation finally withered away: “Focusing all representation in the middle, the centre where man stood resplendent, Renaissance thinkers pretended that they no longer required this space of ‘otherness.’”³⁹ This teleological narrative of historical change rests on a version of the Renaissance which might have stepped from the pages of Burckhardt. But as we have seen, the same multidirectional way of seeing was still very much alive in the work of artists from the era of the witch craze. Artists like Veit Stoss or Rubens were not alluding to a past medievalism when they put witches into the edges of their images, nor were they banishing the grotesque and carnivalesque safely to the margins of art. Rather, these hags were integral to the pictures, and they created a troubling undercurrent to the message these works ostensibly conveyed.

Here another psychoanalytic concept, that of repression, might be helpful to explain what is at work. Just as psychoanalysis itself peels back layers of repression, finding what is hidden beneath, so might historians of culture. In Rubens’s case, the witch is a buried tribute to his predecessors and their invention of the nude; and she also encapsulates his own profound moral ambiguity toward the flesh, whose luscious tones and expansive sensuality he depicted like no artist before him. The queen can ensure that the hags of avarice and envy are vanquished, but still they lurk in the pictorial space, the lighted torch summoning up the demonic force of female sexuality. With her dark skin and slouching gait, the hag seems to be a psychic monster summoned from the depths, contrasting utterly with the luminous flesh of the triumphant, erect bodies of the forces of order. This is not a world of contrarities, a discourse with a clear and stable meaning, but rather a work of the imagination where the forces of evil are banished to the margins of the painting, and yet still find space there.

...

THERE WAS ALSO a deeper level on which the imagery of the witch drew, one which could not so easily be brought to consciousness in the manner

of the classical tradition. This was the legacy of the pagan world on which the classical tradition had been superimposed. This is the most difficult and contradictory dimension of the witch figure, for like the unconscious, its traces are all but completely buried by the proliferation of classicizing and religious images which overlaid it. But that submerged pagan energy was also what gave the figure of the witch much of her anarchic energy.⁴⁰

Most important among these composite figures is that of Diana, a classical goddess associated with the moon. Pitiless huntress, she has no need of man, and she destroys utterly the man who saw her naked. Yet as a goddess who offered help in fertility, she incorporated the older pagan goddesses who embodied fruitfulness at the same time as she displaced them. Figures like this, enshrining fertility and destruction, could be found in a series of other witchlike creatures, too. So, for instance, in Augsburg, as [chapter 2](#) describes, there was the pagan goddess named “Cisa,” the being whom early Augsburgers had worshipped as an embodiment of fertility. Her cult related to the prosperity and growth of the town. Latinate humanists mocked her cult as either an invention or a primitive remnant, at odds with the classicizing version of the past they wished to present. Yet she persisted in popular memory, her visage combining the snake-locks of the Gorgons, so that while she represented fertility, she also stood for its terrifying opposite, the witch figure who destroys fecundity altogether.

What is important here is not so much the actual pagan cult and its real survival — to that extent one might share the impatience of Augsburg’s disdainful humanists, who argued that Cisa was nothing but a popular myth. Rather, what was “pagan” had to be invented as a kind of receptacle for ideas that did not easily fit into Christian frameworks, but that needed to find expression. Witchcraft was full of such pagan undertows. Other humanists, like Sebastian Franck, self-consciously itemized a pagan past, describing the fires at *Sonnenwende* (solstice), festivities designed to encourage the sun’s return and so protect the crops and ensure fertility. In his *Weltbuch*, Franck described the local popular rituals that made up ordinary life in Renaissance Germany.⁴¹ We know so much about this traditional magical culture in part because of the theologians who condemned it in their fight against witchcraft and superstition, cataloguing it as they did so. Just how such ideas might fuse around the figure of the witch is evident in one late-seventeenth-century woodcut image, known to us in several versions and discussed in [chapter 1](#). In the foreground we see a line of witches processing toward a

diabolic goat, while in the background, fires on a hill. At one level, the woodcut conveys the message that all who worship the Devil will be burned as witches. But at another, it evokes the fires of Sonnenwende, lit atop mountains to honor the sun and protect the fruitfulness of the earth (see [figs. 1.5](#) and [1.6](#)).

The figure of the witch took hold of the western European imagination because she could express terrors that lay beyond words, reaching into deep ambivalence about death, identity, and motherhood. But she could also bring different cultural registers together, elite and popular, classical and carnivalesque, allowing writers and artists to escape the carapace of Christianity, while yet apparently subscribing to its moral values. She offered a resource for imagination. Sometimes the obsession with the figure of the witch could issue in the witch hunt; and the disgust with aging female bodies that sixteenth-century culture sanctioned was certainly part of the atmosphere which generated the real violence against so many apparently harmless old women. Yet, like all great art, images of witches in literature and paintings could offer insight into the deepest human emotions, without necessarily acting out such passions in violence against individuals accused of witchcraft. The figure of the witch resists definitive interpretation. It is the enigmatic ambivalence at the heart of these potent images that makes their exploration irresistible.

Chapter One

WITCHCRAFT AND THE WESTERN IMAGINATION

JAN ZIARNKO'S image titled *Witches' Sabbath* accompanies one of the strangest works to be inspired by the European witch hunt, the *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* (1612), by Pierre de Lancre ([fig. 1.1](#)). At the heart of the book, where de Lancre describes the sabbath, the reader can fold out Ziarnko's extraordinarily detailed poster-size image, the visual counterpart of de Lancre's literary evocation of the sights, sounds, and smells of the sabbath. We read of the ritual meal where witches eat bread made of black flour, ground from the bones of unbaptized children, or they stew "unbaptised baby hearts, the flesh of the hanged, and other horrible decaying carcasses." Piling on the metaphors in sentences that barely pause for breath, de Lancre describes a sabbath which resembles a giant marketplace of rotten, stinking organs and liquids in a literary tour de force which seems to have little to do with conventional demonology.¹ Ziarnko's tableau, produced for the second edition of the work in 1613, maps each chilling detail, and there is even an alphabetic key so that the viewer can locate every horror. Word and image join in a single assault on readers' senses as they confront the nightmare world of the demonic gathering. The description of the sabbath forms the climax of de Lancre's work, and it brings together the themes that fascinated him throughout his literary career. He had been involved in hunting witches in the border region of Labourd, and the idea of illusion, the changeability of all things, and the limits of belief obsessed him in all his writings.²



FIG. 1.1. Jan Ziarnko, *Description et figvre du sabbat*. From Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1613), facing p. 118. (By permission of the British Library [719.i.11])

With de Lancre's description of the sabbath, demonology was hijacked for literary effect. Yet extravagant as his creations appear to be, they exploit a possibility that had always lain at the core of writings about witches and the Devil from the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Demonology is often regarded as a science of evil, a corpus of publications that systematized belief about witches, providing the intellectual underpinning of the witch hunt. Stuart Clark, who has done more to illuminate this body of writings than any scholar, has pointed out that demonology was never a genre with defined boundaries, but derived its cultural authority from its capacity to infiltrate differing kinds of writing.³ In this chapter, I shall take Clark's argument a step further, proposing that demonology did not limit itself to mapping the witch-hunter's intellectual belief structure, but contributed to a new literature of entertainment. The cultural legacy of demonology reaches through the *Faustbuch* of 1587 and beyond, to the origins of the German novel.

Historians commonly view demonology as a branch of theology, philosophy, and metaphysics, tending to regard it as a set of arguments that provided the intellectual framework for witchcraft belief, and that presented the world as a set of binary opposites, of good opposed to evil, white to black, and male to female. But demonology was also a Pandora's box, an imaginative resource that inspired drama, art, literature, and other cultural forms, occasionally in directions that led to moral ambiguity and doubt. One reason why it has been so difficult for historians to appreciate the role of entertainment, creativity, and humor in the literature of demonology has been the knowledge that beliefs about witches that were formalized in works like these led to the deaths of hundreds of individuals. It is hard to see such works as anything other than dangerous and pathological.

Such an approach to writings about witches would be misconceived, however. Beliefs trigger aggression only when they fit with other anxieties and conditions; often, they lie dormant in the mind, the contents of which are very far from being a set of coherent arguments. This is one reason why witch-hunting was characteristically episodic, striking particular areas at moments of crisis, and leaving others untouched. From the outset, demonology teased the imagination. Its

intellectual problematic, too, circled around the issue of the nature of the imaginative faculty, the realm of illusion and the power of the senses, all questions central to the nature of art itself. Not for nothing did the most famous fifteenth-century work of demonology, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, embark on a long disquisition on sensory illusion, how perception works, changeability, and fantasy in its opening pages: “For fancy or imagination is as it were the treasury of ideas received through the senses. And through this it happens that devils so stir up the inner perceptions, that is the power of conserving images, that they appear to be a new impression at that moment received from exterior things.”⁴

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THE CLOSE CONNECTION between literature and demonology is evident in the fact that Jean Bodin’s treatise on witchcraft was translated just a year after its appearance in the original French by the German poet and literary genius Johanne Fischart of Strasbourg. Fischart had already translated Rabelais’s masterpiece *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, extending and elaborating the original to produce a German prose epic in its own right, twice the size.⁵ Bodin’s original had been composed in French rather than Latin, and it and *The Six Books of the Commonwealth* were his only works composed in the vernacular: clearly, *Démonomanie des sorciers* (*On the Demon-Mania of Witches*) aimed at a wide market. It has an appendix designed to demolish the arguments of the witch-skeptic Johannes Weyer, but intellectual ambition often seems little more than a fig leaf to conceal Bodin’s desire to titillate, to explore the exotic, and to reveal the intimate workings of the imagination. Bodin relates the dreams of his “friend,” almost certainly the author himself, which featured red and white horses; and the “friend” was visited nightly by a good spirit advising him how to act in daily life.⁶ We hear what Bodin discovered about the art of “tying the codpiece knot” so as to cause impotence, when he was lodging at the house of a French noblewoman whose name he piquantly refuses to disclose. We read of witches in Africa, and lycanthropy in Europe. And we discover how Bodin had been a guest at another household during traveling assizes when a visiting beggar, in reality a witch, had cursed the entire household, him included.⁷ This book is far more than an intellectual treatise, and Bodin by turns fascinates us with his candor about his own experience, dreams, and emotional dilemmas; sweeps us away with a flood of anecdotes and uncanny stories; and dazzles us with a welter of brilliant demolitions of

skeptical arguments. Nor is he above the crudely salacious. So we are told how “in a convent there was a dog people said was a demon, which lifted up the dresses of the nuns to abuse them. It was not a demon, in my opinion, but a normal dog. At Toulouse there was a woman who indulged in this abuse, and the dog tried to violate her in front of everyone.”⁸

Writing like this is pornographic, drawing on staple antimonastic, misogynist fable with little relevance to Bodin’s ostensible argument. But it was just the kind of thing that would appeal to Fischart, the author of a poem in which the author imagines himself a flea, crawling around women’s private parts.⁹

Yet Bodin also stands four-square in the tradition of demonology. His chosen four-part structure, with a final book devoted — broadly — to the trial and punishment of witches, was loosely modeled on the design of the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of Witches) of 1486, by then a classic a century old. Written by the infamous Dominican Heinrich Kramer, the *Malleus* has been credited by some with having caused the witch craze, though it appeared in Latin a hundred years before the major European witch hunts. It was certainly well known and widely available. Ostensibly an intellectual treatise designed around a series of questions, objections, and responses, its appeal has little to do with the force of its arguments. These, as many readers have pointed out, are self-contradictory, illogical, and frequently just get dropped as something else captures Kramer’s interest.¹⁰ The technique of larding demonology with anecdote was exploited by the *Malleus*, and though it lacks Bodin’s flashes of introspection, it also bears the stamp of personal experience. Writing in the wake of a failed witchcraft persecution, Kramer was coming to terms with defeat. He responded by magnifying the threat posed to Christian society by witchcraft; and when he referred to what he had seen with his own eyes, he underlined the role of clerics like himself in the ongoing struggle. So he writes about the witch in a place called “N” who stole a host wafer and buried it in a pot, and whose crime was discovered when a child’s crying was heard. Kramer concludes by advising his fellow priests that women should only receive communion with their tongues well out, and their garments well clear, so that they cannot misuse the sacrament.¹¹

The *Malleus* has a picaresque quality that foreshadowed later writings. The rekindling of interest in witchcraft that took place after 1560, when a new and larger wave of persecution began, helped the genre take off, as a clutch of writers like Del Rio, Boguet, Daneau, Binsfeld, and Rémy

developed its potential. Their works are heterogeneous in style — Bodin’s rhetorical brilliance has little in common with Del Rio’s exhaustive categorization of all the different kinds of magic, or with Guazzo’s plodding compilation — and yet they form a recognizable body of work, partly because they are all parasitic on one another. Boguet deals with trials in Franche-Comté, but he plunders Rémy’s account of Lorraine for all the stories he can find; Bodin borrows liberally from Weyer, whose work he is supposedly attacking, and Guazzo sews stories from Bodin, Rémy, and the others into a seamless whole. Some of the borrowings even run counter to confessional belonging. Nearly everyone, Protestant or Catholic, cited the Dominican *Malleus*. Bodin draws on the Protestant Daneau; while the Jesuit Martin Del Rio makes understandably heavy weather of a story he has drawn from Luther about a “heretic woman” who gave birth to a baby “vested and tonsured like an ecclesiastic.”¹² They found a ready market across Europe, especially in German-speaking areas: just about every major work of demonology from these decades was published in German or found a German publisher for a local Latin edition.¹³

Not only were the stories predictable; so, too, were the topics to which the demonologists turned. Practically every demonologist felt compelled to consider the question of whether demons could sire children, and whether changelings were demonic.¹⁴ The outlines of the witchcraft story had become standardized, too, with seduction, pact, dance, baptism, and sabbath forming so recognizable a sequence that by the time Guazzo penned his *Compendium*, it was possible to offer an illustrated guide to witchcraft: his text is adorned with a series of woodcuts of witches in all the familiar lurid scenes, the witches tricked out in contemporary fashionable clothing with Devils to match. These images linger on the repellent: we see children butchered by well-dressed matrons, or pious-looking burghers spitting on the cross. Some owners even had these cheap woodcut images hand-tinted to enhance their appearance ([figs. 1.2](#) and [1.3](#)).¹⁵

Like the images, the stories seem to revel in the gory. Kramer tells us of the midwife of Dann in the diocese of Basel who killed more than forty young children by sticking needles into their skulls as they came out of the womb, or relates a story he heard from “the Inquisitor of Como” about “a certain man” who found a congress of women killing his child, drinking its blood and devouring it.¹⁶ Later demonologists readily exploited this kind of writing. Nicolas Rémy describes how two witches disinterred the bodies of two infants, cutting off the right arm, so that

“the finger-tips of that dismembered limb used to burn with a blue sulphurous flame until they had entirely completed the business which they had in hand; and when the flame was extinguished the fingers would be just as whole and unimpaired as if they had not been providing the tinder for a light”— a ghoulishly vivid description of the so-called Hand of Glory.¹⁷ He goes on to describe children being ripped from the bodies of pregnant women, and the cooking of infant flesh, concluding with a hint of embarrassment, “But this is perhaps more than enough about a particularly unpleasant subject.”¹⁸ Such writing is certainly designed to shock and appall, and the savoring of vivid details suggests it is also part of the text’s attraction, like the horror film and hard-core pornography, which continue to draw on images of violence and dismemberment as entertainment. Then, as now, the subject matter of witchcraft offers fertile possibilities for such forms of pleasure; what gave it a special frisson to sixteenth-and seventeenth-century audiences was the possibility that it might be true.

The demonological treatises make infuriating reading because they mix authority of very different kinds. Personal experience, jurists, theologians, the Bible, and classical authors are all cited alongside one another as if they offered equivalent proof of the reality of witchcraft. The *Malleus* adopted this technique, and it is to be found in most other demonological writers. Classical references were of course part of a general tendency of this period to recuperate the heritage of antiquity; but the possibilities this literature opened up for witchcraft writings were electrifying. For where the Bible offered meager pickings to those interested in witches — Saul and the Witch of Endor, the injunction in Exodus, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live”— the classical tradition featured sorceresses, enchantresses, and witches, from Circe to Medea, whose cultural resonances were far broader. Though the *Malleus* carefully distinguishes between classical “myth” and writers it regards as historians, classical literature provided a treasure trove of exotic stories about witches that could be mentioned in the same breath as trials in which Kramer had himself participated. So, in one typical passage, Kramer piled up material on witches who could unbewitch from Aquinas and St. Bonaventure, adding a story about an unnamed bishop and love magic from the time of Pope Nicholas, going on to mention his own experience in Reichshofen, where such crowds flocked to a particular witch that it was worth the local count’s while to set up a tollbooth to collect money from the travelers, before embarking on a long story about a “certain market merchant” of Speyer who was bewitched.¹⁹ These

stories in turn became part of demonological tradition, and can be found in Bodin, Guazzo, Boguet, and Del Rio, where, by the time they were writing, classical references were a badge of learning accepted across Europe. But the result of the mixture of classical references with contemporary cases was disturbing, for it linked the humdrum, poor witch of the time to the much more ambiguous figures of classical literature: snake-haired goddesses or glamorous creatures like Circe. These were sorceresses who resembled alchemists, able to shape-shift or transform one substance into another.²⁰



FIG. 1.2. Cutting up bodies of criminals. From Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum* (Milan, 1626), 149. (By permission of the British Library [719.h.8])



FIG. 1.3. Spitting on the cross. From Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum* (Milan, 1626), 34. (By permission of the British Library [719.h.8])

The figure of the witch was beginning to take on a life of her own. Like the proud owners who had their woodcuts color-brushed, turning cheap print into collector's items, the demonologists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began to embellish their works with self-consciously writerly techniques. They invented lively dialogue and tested their literary skills on set-piece descriptions, in particular, of flight, the dance, and the sabbath. These were also the subjects which had established themselves as artistic genre scenes. Sometimes, as in Jan Ziarnko's image of the sabbath that accompanied de Lancre's text, the point was to clarify the didactic message. But just as de Lancre's writing is bursting with extravagant hyperbole, so, too, the sabbath, flight, and dance scenes became an opportunity for the artist to show off his skill, presenting half-nude bodies falling from different perspectives, using the etching techniques to cram in as much detail as possible, and structuring a complex pictorial panorama where each appalling incident vies for the viewer's attention. Michael Heer and Matthäus Merian the Elder's vast etching of Walpurgis Eve (ca. 1620) packs every kind of depravity into one broadsheet, aiming at as encyclopedic an effect as the literary demonologists. Others, like Jacques de Gheyn, strove to re-create the grisly mood of the sabbath, featuring remote, wild landscapes. These visions, like the literary descriptions, were designed to tease the imagination and stick in the mind.

De Lancre was certainly not the first to exploit the literary potential of the sabbath. The *Malleus* does not feature a sabbath, and Kramer does not dwell on the sensation of flight; but Bodin penned an extended passage on the hideous music played at the diabolic dance in his work of 1580. By the time we get to Rémy (1595), we have extensive descriptions of the dreadful sound of the fiddle and bagpipes to be heard at sabbaths. Descriptions of dancing, which were at first little more than references to the dance, soon expatiated on how devils danced back to back, condemning the "whirling dance" of the witches, which made "people wild and raging, and women to miscarry," or castigating those witches who "run masked about the streets in their Carnivals of pleasure" ([fig. 1.4](#)).²¹ Like other moral campaigners, including the authors of the Devil books, demonologists often titillated as much as they condemned.²²

...

THE MOST significant German artistic production of the era of the witch hunt was the printed story of Faust, which appeared in Frankfurt in 1587

and was based on a popular story about the real Dr. Faustus, an intellectual who reputedly sold his soul to the Devil. It soon became a classic. The year before, another Frankfurt publisher had produced a bumper *Theatrum veneficis* (Theater of Witches), packing seventeen treatises by different authors into a single volume. This publishing venture was evidently modeled on a *Theatrum diabolorum* (Theater of Devils) published by another Frankfurt house in 1569 and containing a series of moral tracts laced with humor. Each sin is given its own Devil, from the He-Man Devil to the Trousers Devil, which lampooned the new fashion for Turkish-style trousers. Hoping to cash in on the vogue for witchcraft tales, the publisher, Nicolas Basse, and the editor, Abraham Saur, plumped for a motley bunch of demonologists. Some were known skeptics, like Johannes Weyer; some, like Johannes Gödelmann, were skeptical about some aspects of the witch hunt; others, like Lambert Daneau, were believers. Broadly Protestant, it ranged from Ulrich Molitor's old fifteenth-century treatise on witches through the ghost stories of Lavater to the strange meditations of Paulus Frisius on the Devil and illusion.²³ But Basse was surely counting on the entertainment value of these works to sell them, too.²⁴



FIG. 1.4. Detail of [fig. 1.1](#) showing sabbath dance (H). (By permission of the British Library [719.i.11])

Again, we find a stream of stories buried in the treatises, even Tannhäuser making an appearance.²⁵ August Lercheimer writes of how “I myself heard from a sorcerer of how he together with others from ‘N’ in Saxony flew on a coat for more than a hundred miles to Paris for a wedding uninvited; but how, when a murmur went up about who these

uninvited guests were and where they had come from, they quickly made off.”²⁶ He was not the only person to be gripped by this fantastic version of the flying carpet story. The passage was lifted almost verbatim the next year by the author of the *Faustbuch*, where it forms part of the fabulous anti-Catholic tour the Devil gives Faust. The duo travel to the wedding in Paris on their magic coat, but the *Faustbuch* goes one better, describing all the cities of Germany over which they pass. When they get to Rome, Faust cannot contain himself, exclaiming, “Pfuy! Why didn’t the Devil make me a Pope too?” because he saw “all his equals, that is conceit, pride, arrogance, immoderation, gorging, drinking, whoredom, adultery and all the godless being of the papacy and his tools, so that he was moved to say afterwards ‘I thought I was a pig or sow of the Devil, but he must keep me for longer. These pigs of Rome are fattened, and all ready to roast and cook.’ ”²⁷ This is not a witch’s flight, but the passage owes a good deal to the idea of flight elaborated in demonology, as well as to antipapist propaganda, moralistic Devil books, and even to the tradition of travel-book descriptions of cities, which goes back to one of the first classics of print, Hartmann Schedel’s *Chronicle of the World*.²⁸ A work like the *Faustbuch* could directly plagiarize demonology, opening up its imaginative possibilities and expanding the writer’s subjects. The teasing skepticism evident in Basse’s selection fostered this use of its material, but demonology’s own potential to stimulate the imagination fueled a distinct baroque sensibility.

The fascination with language, stories, and the imagination was not the only feature that gave demonology such potential as entertainment. Demonology also allowed authors to experiment with character types. Bodin exploited this to the full, referring throughout his book to the case of the accused witch Jeanne Harvillier to provide a kind of narrative thread binding the work together; Boguet copied the technique, opening with a leaden version of the story of the possessed girl Loyse Maillat in an attempt to enliven his text with human interest. There were, of course, certain kinds of individuals whose cases particularly attracted literary attention of this kind: Jeanne Harvillier and Loyse Maillat were young girls, not the old women who in fact formed the majority of victims of the witch hunt.²⁹

The records of witches’ trials could themselves become literature. Nicolas Rémy packs his text with countless individuals culled from the trial records that had “beaten at his brain” for expression — in his work, demonology comes close to paraphrase of criminal trial records as he summarizes scores of individual cases. De Lancre also includes trial

material from the Labourd region; and August Lercheimer, from whose tract the flying-coat story was taken, concludes with criminal protocols of six widows. He includes them to show how women could make confessions which were untrue and impossible, but, as the title page of the whole volume shows, advertising the “confessions, examinations, test, trial records and punishment of some executed witches,” they were also thought to appeal to buyers.³⁰ Popular presses produced cheap broadsheet accounts of witch trials to accompany executions. Typically, these were set out as a narrative of an individual’s seduction and fall into the clutches of the Devil, and illustrated, cartoon-style, by woodcuts depicting each scene. The blocks were standard, often reused to illustrate another execution with only the names changed. Such a focus on the individual, and her fate, also posed the question of what kind of person could sink so low. It was the very attractiveness of these young women as character types, their dreadful descent into sin, and their terrible subsequent history that suggested dramatic possibilities.

The most remarkable example of the crossover from demonology to drama is Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* of 1588, written a year after the *Faustbuch* was published in German. In one sense, it is perhaps a short step from printing a trial record (as the *Theater of Witches* did), which is itself a dialogue, to transposing stories about witches and demons into dialogue form. Works of demonology, like many polemics, occasionally experimented with the use of the dialogue as a didactic device: Lambert Daneau, the Calvinist demonologist, had produced a dialogue on witches which was translated into English and German the year after its publication, while George Gifford later employed the same technique to lambaste cunning folk and satirize popular credulity about witchcraft.³¹ Drama, however, also stretched the limits of belief. Demonology from its inception was obsessed with the boundaries between illusion and reality; and the very same issues were raised by the spectacle of the theater.

The uneasy relationship between theater and reality occasionally produced confused reactions in the audience. In Exeter, a performance of Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus* ended in pandemonium when it was discovered that “there was one devell too many amongst them, and so after a little pause desired the people to pardon them, they could go no further with this matter, the people also understanding the thing as it was, every man hastened to be first out of doores.” Theatrical experience was so powerful that it became real.³² By contrast, in 1661 in Augsburg, the fifteen-year-old chimney sweep Johannes Lutzenberger confessed, like Faust, to making a pact with the Devil. He said a man dressed in black had given

him and his companions nuts, pears, and handfuls of coin. Lutzenberger was certain his benefactor was the Evil One. But when his companions were interrogated, they said they thought the strange man had come from the *Comedi*, a carnival character: they were sure this was theater, not witchcraft.³³

Drama offered a host of ambivalent ways of presenting the witch that drew not only on demonology and pamphlets but on classical culture. Marston's *The Tragedy of Sophonisba*, 1604–6, offers us a classical witch, a truly terrifying old yellow hag who tricks the villain into satisfying her repulsive lust. By contrast, the *Witch of Edmonton*, first performed in 1621, presents an ordinary seventeenth-century English witch, Elizabeth Sawyer, whose case also featured in a pamphlet by Henry Goodcole. She is an old woman with one eye, and the drama features a Devil Dog. The play is unusual because it is sympathetic to her as a figure who is unjustly accused. Middleton's *The Witch* borrows wholesale from the witchcraft skeptic Scot, filching its lists of demons and cauldron ingredients from *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*.³⁴ As Anna Bayman has recently argued, London's print market was volatile, and metropolitan audiences were tiring of credulous witch pamphlets:³⁵ one reason may have been their saturation in the far more thrilling versions of witchcraft offered in the plays of Shakespeare, or the gory dramas of Webster. Here witchcraft has avowedly moved into the sphere of imagination, and many of these works presumed a knowing agnosticism among their London audience.

• • •

IN ITS EXPLOITATION of terror and titillation, of belief and skepticism, demonology often also depended on humor. Here writers drew on a medieval tradition of laughing at the Devil. The *Malleus* contains the unforgettable passage about male members which “eat oats and corn,” going on to describe how “a certain man tells that, when he had lost his member, he approached a known witch to ask her to restore it to him. She told the afflicted man to climb a certain tree, and that he might take which he liked out of a nest in which there were several members. And when he tried to take a big one, the witch said: You must not take that one; adding, because it belonged to a parish priest.”³⁶ This is clearly Dominican propaganda, a knowing, sexy *fabliau* directed against their competitors, the parish clergy. The story is meant to be funny, not to be understood as the literal “truth.”

Humor and the demonic go together in a joke from Schwäbisch-Hall recounted in a prose work by Georg Widmann. One night, the Devil spies a salt maker with a cauldron full of boiling water; and putting his large nose through a slit in the salt house, he says, “How about this for a nose?” The salt steamer promptly tips the cauldron of hot salty water over the Devil’s nose, saying, “How about this for a flow?” For answer, the Devil picks up the salt maker and throws him over the river and the cauldron over the Gensbühl hill, retorting, “How about this for a throw?”³⁷ The nose is a penis, and the competition is over who can ejaculate farthest: the Devil seems to be getting the worst of it until the cheeky salt steamer meets his comeuppance.

Comic stories about the Devil had a venerable lineage, going back to oral tradition; and tales about peasants and trickery that even surpasses the Devil were classics of print.³⁸ These elements found their way into the published *Faustbuch* of 1587. For example, Faust meets a peasant one night in town with a cart laden with animal feed, and gets into mock negotiation with him, asking what price he will accept to let him eat his fill. The peasant, playing along with the whim of the drunken, well-heeled townsman, agrees to a figure — only to gape with astonishment when Faust opens his mouth and consumes half the load. Or Faust sells a pair of fine horses to a horse dealer, warning the new owner never to ride them through water. The curious horse dealer cannot resist trying this at the first opportunity — and finds himself sitting on two bales of straw. Furious, he rushes off to complain. Finding Faust sleeping, he takes him by the leg, and, to his horror, the limb comes off in his hand. Faust cries, “Murder!” and the terrified horse dealer flees the scene. Here, tradition is turned on its head: the trickster is an urban, educated sophisticate, and his dupes are peasants and that canniest of swindlers, the horse dealer.³⁹

Humor did not exclude tragedy, and the full ambiguity of the Faust figure and of evil emerges as it slides imperceptibly from the burlesque to the tragic mode. In *Faust*, the Devil is at first a conjuror with a sense of humor; and finally a terrifying force that literally destroys Faust, leaving his blood and brains spattered about the room. Faust himself is at once the debauched drunkard, the sophisticated intellectual, the solicitous visitor who gives his pregnant hostess miraculous Italian grapes, and the fraudster. But he is also the man who, terrified of his own end, begs his beloved student companions to eat and drink with him one last time, and then sends them off to bed, knowing he must face the Devil alone.⁴⁰ He stands for all of us. This is what makes him such a compelling figure for

Marlowe's drama.

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THE AESTHETIC of the German baroque is distinguished by its virtuoso shifting from one mode to another, from tragedy to comedy to theology. In demonology, jokes, drama, and prose, we find this characteristically promiscuous mixture of sexual titillation, interest in character, fascination with the bizarre, and humor of a wonderfully explosive, bodily kind. All these elements contributed to the next metamorphosis of the literature of the diabolic, as the early German novel that took shape in the second half of the seventeenth century.

The growth of a reading public had created a market for printed stories, and by 1650, with witch-hunting in decline, tales of witchcraft featured among the anthologies that canny authors compiled to turn a penny. The *Hundstägige Erquickstunden* of 1650 — Stories for Those Dog Days — included many stories about witches, drawn from the works of demonologists, classical sources, and others. It was self-consciously designed to amuse, “to drive away melancholy,” and its twelfth chapter dealt with witchcraft at length, moving straight on to discuss hermaphroditism.⁴¹ In 1668, Johann Praetorius built on its success when he published his *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* (Stories from the Blocksberg), a collection of fabulous tales about witchcraft and the uncanny.⁴² Here we read about lesbian witches in Africa who lure the respectable wives who take their fancy; of Lilith and the Jewish spirits that grow on menstrual blood, enjoy sex with young men, and stalk the chambers of women in childbirth. Praetorius also furnishes vivid and gruesome descriptions of the witches' sabbath, material which Goethe later drew on for his own *Faust*. All this owes a great deal to works of demonology written fifty years or more before, at the height of the witch craze. We meet old friends, like the journeyman who watches his widowed mistress go each night when all are abed to a certain place in the stable where she reaches out for her pitchfork. Suspecting her, he copies her action — and finds himself at a sabbath, a story that is also reminiscent of Hans Baldung Grien's haunting woodcut *The Enchanted Groom* of 1544.⁴³ Praetorius's sources are the works of demonologists like Bodin, Rémy, Kramer, and Grillando; but he exploits them for their entertainment value, making good use of the *Hundstägige Erquickstunden* and setting stories culled from demonologists alongside ghost stories, local fables, and puzzles. A prolific author, Praetorius also invented the wonderful

character Rübenzal, whose adventures were often pirated from older works, such as the printed *Faust-buch*. A collected *Daemonologia Rubinzalii* was published in 1661, its title a tongue-in-cheek reference to demonology that would have been unthinkable a generation before.⁴⁴

The *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* is illustrated with a dramatic woodcut of the Blocksberg itself, which owes more than a little to earlier panoramas of witchcraft: indeed, it is adapted directly from Michael Heer and Matthäus Merian's panoramic broadsheet vision of witchcraft of 1626 (fig. 1.5). But instead of providing a moral commentary on the inescapable punishment of witchcraft, death by burning, this image stuffs every salacious tidbit about demons, pagan belief, and witches into one pastiche (fig. 1.6). Again we see witches flying to sabbaths on goats, while another tumbles precipitously downward, her hair loose and her dress raised to reveal her legs. At the bottom of the image, a giant winged Devil defecates into a chamber pot, a motif that seems to have been pinched straight from Lutheran propaganda about the diabolic origins of the monks, where She-Devils sitting on gallows defecate monks.⁴⁵ At the center of the image, witches perform the anal kiss on a giant goat, while long lines of assorted pairs of devils and witches wind their way in a snakelike spiral around the picture, playing phallic-looking bagpipes and horns.⁴⁶



FIG. 1.5. *Witches' Sabbath*. From the 1626 broadsheet *Zauberey*, design by Michael Heer, engraving by Matthäus Merian the Elder. (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg)

The image is framed by the Blocksberg, or Brocken, the mountain

fabled as the setting for Walpurgis Night, when witches from all over Germany would gather for a huge sabbath. Praetorius begins his work with a naturalistic description of the mountain, devoid of vegetation and shrouded in mists. Now, instead of Faust's fantastic journeys with Mephistopheles, witchcraft furnishes information for a real tourist guide, and Praetorius provides a real-life account of his ascent to the summit of the Blocksberg; and the main character of the book is not the witch or even the Devil, but the mountain itself.⁴⁷

Happel's *Größte Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt* (Greatest Curiosities of the World), a baggy, multivolume epic, published in 1683 and another forerunner of the picaresque German novel, also includes an entire section devoted to the diabolic and miraculous, and boasts, among its section on geology, a long description of the Blocksberg, where it is "generally believed that every year, on Walburg's night or May 1, the witches hold their gatherings."⁴⁸ Happel describes how the mountain is always wreathed in fog, and discusses the uncanny nature of the views over great distances that it affords; but he explains this naturalistically: "The cause is that while one is surrounded by cloud, there is clear and bright sunshine both below and above." Yet then he shifts gear, appending a story about a medical doctor who found himself on the Brocken at a spring, and sticking his hand beneath it to discover the source of the perishing coldness of the water, found pellets of silver; once off the mountain, he could never again find the treasure.



FIG. 1.6. Frontispiece of the Blocksberg. From Johann Praetorius, *Blockes-*



FIG. 1.7. Illustration of the story “The Diabolic Postal Service,” in Eberhard Happel, *Größte Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt, oder sogenannte Relationes curiosae*, 5 vols. (Hamburg, 1683–90), vol. 3. (By permission of the British Library [446.b.5])

Happel draws on some chestnuts of demonology. We meet the wonderfully titled “Diabolic Postal Service,” which tells of the Dutch merchant who encounters a man at an inn in Livonia ([fig. 1.7](#)). The stranger boasts he can fly to the man’s house in the Netherlands and back in an hour. Naturally the merchant bets that he cannot; but the stranger reappears within the hour, bearing a silver spoon from his house and the ring off his wife’s finger.⁴⁹ The speedy stranger is the Devil, a motif indebted to the stories of witches who fly to sabbaths while their husbands sleep. This tall tale is illustrated by a woodcut of a fabulous diabolic cart, horses, reins, diabolic outriders, and all flying through the air; the ultimate comic transmutation of the witch on her goat.

Demonology had become entertainment. By the 1690s, a clutch of old French demonological classics were being reprinted, this time not for their worth as intellectual treatises, but for fun.⁵⁰ Witchcraft had become part of a popular market for stories; the witch, a character of fiction.

The figure of the witch can even be traced in the novels of Hans Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen, the best-known of all the seventeenth-century German writers, whose style epitomizes the baroque. His fictional antihero, Courasche, the woman who survives all that the Thirty Years’ War can throw at her, is no witch but a tough,

sexually experienced haridan. She stands for the moral bankruptcy caused by the Thirty Years' War, yet she has the classic attributes of a witch: sexual licentiousness and old age. At one point in the novel she even purchases a familiar, who makes her tavern business boom, for no one can resist her diabolic beer. Courasche has escaped the typology of the witch to become a character in her own right. And yet, it was the interest in character type evident in trials and demonology that provided the materials from which an emblematic figure like Courasche could emerge.⁵¹

...

THE BAROQUE aesthetic in literature is widely treated as an inferior form of art, or even regarded as pathological. Yet the picaresque manages to celebrate the variety of life, encompassing the gross, the tragic, and the comic in one gargantuan whole, and presenting without embarrassment the closeness of pleasure to pain or of sex to comedy. By the close of the eighteenth century, these varied modes had begun to part company, as the witch of nursery tale finally separated from the Faust of drama.

There is a difference between fantasy and reality. Men like Rémy were implicated in the deaths of hundreds of people, and though his work breathes a disconcerting empathy for the women whose individual souls he hoped to save, he acted on his murderous impulses. It is for the historian to consider not just the subversions and interesting possibilities that art and literature offered, but the more difficult issue of the relationship between such violent, ribald fantasies about sex and women — often with a vicious streak, as in depictions of old women — and the horrors of witch-hunting. What makes fantasies and beliefs trigger violent action is not just the beliefs or the fantasies themselves, but a set of historical circumstances — which in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries included religious tensions, legal systems, and dearth.

This tour of the cultural legacy of the figure of the witch has taken us from demonology to drama, image, and the novel. As we follow her progress from the demonology of the late fifteenth century through the flowering of writings about the Devil in the 1570s and beyond, we trace the gradual disenchantment of the figure of the witch and the final domestication of the Devil. From the outset, demonology fired the imagination, and, like other moralist literature, it consistently threatened to entertain its audience at least as much as it instructed. Demonologists

knew their markets — or their publishers did — and the possibilities of set-piece description, writerly flair, and a damn good story were always there to be exploited. Humor was not incidental to this, for audiences were gripped as much by laughter as by terror. By laughing at the Devil, sixteenth-and seventeenth-century people's belief in him was not one whit diminished. Humor, it might be claimed, is a means of warding off evil, just as the way to get rid of the Devil, according to Luther, was to fart at him.⁵²

But laughter, of course, also tends to tease belief. What drove demonology from the very beginning was its obsession with the issue of truth and illusion, and that is why so many of the stories that demonologists loved also stretch credulity, and are funny. What was true, and what was really one step too far? Was flight real? Did people truly participate in the sabbath or only think they did? Could devils really make penises disappear? These were the questions with which demonologists played again and again. When Protestant demonologists asserted that the Devil was the master of illusion and so all his effects might be in the mind rather than literally true,⁵³ they seemed to solve the issue of what could be believed at a stroke. But they also immensely increased the scope of illusion, for anything could *seem* to be true. Even Catholic demonologists were willing to grant that many of the Devil's effects were illusory; but it was often the funniest of these tales that had to be explained, and once told, they stuck in the mind. Who could forget the luckless flyers Peter Binsfeld describes, who “fall from the trees and break or crush their bones”?⁵⁴

Beyond their conscious, intentional message, these texts appeal to the senses, the unconscious and the irrational. Humor, after all, works because it appeals to the repressed, and to what cannot be easily corralled into logical argument. In the crude pranks of the burlesque Devil, we can almost hear the belly laughter of the audience. This did not stop them from watching him enter the next scene as a terrifying demon once more. Like Shakespeare's players in *Hamlet*, the German baroque imagination had no difficulty in simultaneously accommodating “tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral.” But rather than merely laugh at this bizarre jumble of competing aesthetic modes, its very chaos may disclose something vital to understanding the early modern mind. The literature of demonology opened up a whole imaginative world that drew on classical reference as well as the Bible to create something vivid and new. Belief in witchcraft was never just a

matter of subscribing to a set of propositions about witches and demons or even to a consistent binary worldview of a universe caught between good and evil. Like all belief, it consisted in a morass of images, half-articulated convictions, and contradictory positions, elements of which could occasionally come together in searing clarity to fuel suspicion that a particular individual was a witch.

Chapter Two

THE GORGON OF AUGSBURG

WRITING HIS chronicle of the history of Augsburg during the 1530s, as the Reformation was being formally adopted in his town, the Catholic monk Clemens Sender set down a famous story from the year 1435. It concerned the daughter of an Augsburg bath keeper, Agnes, who won the heart of Albrecht, future duke of Bavaria. Despite the huge disparity in rank, Albrecht promised her marriage, and provided a lady-in-waiting for her “as if for a princess.”¹ But Albrecht’s father, Duke Ernst, could not accept such an unsuitable match, and when Albrecht was away from home, he seized the opportunity, ordering the woman to be drowned in the Danube at Straubingen. The hangman tied her up and was about to throw her into the river, when he gave her one last chance: if she would confess that Albrecht was not her husband, he would let her go. She refused, insisting that she was Albrecht’s lawful wife. So the hangman threw her into the river and pulled her under the water, but she did not drown. Three times he dragged her down, until finally he “took a long pole and wound it around Agnes’s hair, for she had very beautiful, long hair,” and pulled her right down to the bottom.² Only then did she drown. Albrecht, grief-stricken, built a chapel to her memory and founded three eternal masses for her soul.

Beautiful woman, innocent victim, and ordinary girl — the story of Agnes figures in many of the city’s chronicles. It can be read as a Cinderella tale about how a lowly town girl can rise to become a duchess through marriage. Indeed, Agnes was of lower than lowly birth, for since bath keepers dealt intimately with the body, they were in many areas of Germany considered dishonorable, while women who worked in bathhouses might be suspected of prostitution. All the same, Agnes caught the eye of none other than the son of the Duke of Bavaria, and

instead of making her his mistress, he honored her as his wife.³

It is also a story with a pointed political message. Bavaria, the territory which neighbored the imperial city of Augsburg, was the town's traditional enemy. By the time Sender was composing his chronicle, Augsburg was reaching the height of its power as one of the richest cities in southern Germany, a proud center of culture, learning, trade, and the arts, and a player in imperial politics. Bavaria might be a powerful duchy, but its cities were no match for the grandeur of Augsburg. When, in Sender's chronicle, Agnes insists on her fairy-tale marriage to the son of the duke, she is also standing up to the might of Bavaria, just as her city often had to; and she is asserting the honor of the citizen town dweller as equal to that of the noble. The cruel, heartless duke whom Augsburgers knew Ernst to be flouts the law and murders his son's low-born wife. Agnes represents the self-confidence of all Augsburgers, rich and poor.

When Sender wrote, the story of Agnes Bernauer had long been told and retold, and was part of the popular mythology of Augsburg. The tale of the Augsburg "Angel," as she was popularly known,⁴ spawned its own real-life rerun when, in 1557, the beautiful patrician's daughter Philippine Welser secretly married the son of Emperor Ferdinand I: fortunately this time, the marriage was recognized. There is a sixteenth-century portrait of Agnes, a *Meisterlied* by the Nuremberg Meistersinger Hans Sachs, and a sixteenth-century ballad version of the tale, in which the hangman's servant offers to marry Agnes and save her life.⁵ Hangmen were so dishonorable that touch or contact of any kind with them was polluting. They could marry only among their own, creating an early modern caste of executioners and knackers; and so this gruesome match would have meant civic death, rendering Agnes as dishonorable as the hangman. She of course proudly chooses to die rather than deny she was the rightful wife of the duke's son.⁶

And yet there is something troubling about her tale. Not all Augsburgers saw Agnes as a martyr.⁷ The famous civic secretary of Augsburg, the humanist Conrad Peutinger, thought Agnes was the author of her own miseries. A scheming gold digger, she had overreached herself, wanting "to become duchess of Bavaria by force." Far from insisting on the validity of her marriage, she tried everything, Peutinger says, to save her skin, pleading with the stern duke to be allowed to enter a convent — to no avail.⁸

Both Peutinger and Sender describe the grisly story of the serial attempts to drown her until, finally, her glorious long hair was her

undoing. The long hair might remind us of her name saint, Agnes, whose nakedness was miraculously covered by hair when she was taken to a brothel by her tormentors. She, too, was promised her life if only she would marry, and forswear her lover Christ. But the story of the triple drownings also echoes the test for witchcraft. “Swimming the witch” was the ultimate catch-22 trial, where if the witch swims, she is guilty because she has been rejected by the element of water; but if she is innocent, she sinks. The test had long been known in southern Germany, and, though Agnes’s drowning was not a witch swimming as such, the difficulty of drowning her hints at the Bavarian interpretation of her story. For if a man of high estate were smitten with love for a woman of low origins — in this case, even shameful birth — and were to behave in a manner counter to dynastic logic, a ready explanation of his behavior lay to hand: he was the victim of love magic.⁹ Inciting passionate love, a disruptive passion which unbalanced the mind, was a form of malefice, and the woman who provoked it was an enchantress. As the Bavarians’ justification for the deed to Emperor Sigismund argued, Duke Ernst had Agnes drowned for sorcery: she was an “evil woman,” a witch, who had caused his son to suffer from melancholy and endangered his life; and had also plotted to poison both Duke Ernst and his brother Duke Wilhelm’s sickly son Adolf.¹⁰

At the heart of Augsburg’s political history, then, was a civic heroine who was executed as a sorceress. How was this possible? As several studies of political language and gender have shown, female figures were often used to represent political entities, even when real women could not vote or be fully part of the political community. Justice, a cardinal civic virtue, was, like Faith, Hope, or Chastity, frequently depicted as a woman. When Magdeburg was sacked by Tilly’s forces during the Thirty Years’ War, the town was represented as a raped virgin, an innocent victim, and not as a combatant. As Ulinka Rublack has shown, this was part of a long tradition of representing towns as maidens.¹¹ Yet such symbolic figures can sometimes enjoy a strange license, even loudly contradicting feminine ideals: as Rublack points out, Gescha Melburg became famous as the maid who fought to defend her own city of Braunschweig, while Joan of Arc, who cross-dressed, fought, and was accused of witchcraft, could stand for France; or Catalina de Erauso, who became a Spanish soldier, fought duels and bore arms for her country, became a kind of mascot for the Spanish army.¹²

Such Amazonian figures, however, underline how difficult it was for femininity to find a place in politics. It might be argued that Erauso, like

Joan of Arc, with her masculine demeanor and famed courage, was not so much a model for women as an elevation of heroic male values. If Justice is a woman, she is a depersonalized representation whose virtuous rationality tells us little about how real women were viewed. And though the city could be imagined as female, it could be hard to find a place for women in ordinary civic political discourse. Political language was highly gendered, but it usually associated real women with disorder. Though the “common man” was repeatedly invoked as the addressee of Reformation pamphlets, and his support appealed to by city fathers, the term “common women” referred not to ordinary female members of the commune, but to prostitutes. While the abstract common man embodied independent rational political subjecthood, the common woman stood for everything that was disruptive in the female sex.¹³

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SO HOW COULD a potential witch represent the city? Agnes Bernauer was not the only “witch” to play a positive role in Augsburg’s history. The city’s chroniclers liked to trace the town’s origins back to the Amazons, claiming that the city had been defeated and then settled by followers of the Amazon queen, terrifying women who cut off one breast so as to be better warriors and who dashed out the brains of their newborn sons.¹⁴ Achilles Pirmin Gasser, whose sixteenth-century study notes their part in Augsburg’s history, relates that the Amazons left behind “some wild evil women” as settlers; he could not resist the parenthetical jibe at his fellow women citizens: “of whom many can still be found there to this day.”¹⁵ The chroniclers also told how the later Roman settlement was threatened by the advances of Attila the Hun, who was laying waste to the countryside outside Augsburg. As he approached the Lech River, a terrifying old hag with streaming hair and shriveled breasts appeared, riding on horseback and screaming: “Turn back!” ([fig. 2.1](#)).



FIG. 2.1. Attila's forces confronted by a hag outside Augsburg. From Paul von Stetten, *Geschichte der Heiligen Römischen Reichsstadt Augsburg*, 2 vols. (1743; Augsburg, 1758), 1:22. (Bibliothek der Universität Augsburg)

Attila fled, and the city was saved, thanks to a woman whom chroniclers described as a witch. In 1613, a poem described her as “without saddle or whip, badly clothed, half-naked and with flying hair, with outstretched arms, thin and old, almost like a witch.”¹⁶ When the gates were renewed early in the seventeenth century, her image was painted on the Franciscans' Gate, a remnant of the original city wall which by the sixteenth century stood in the middle of the town, and Latin gold lettering explained the story so there could be no mistake ([fig. 2.2](#)).¹⁷ Here, then, we have another witch figure: this time on a gate, a place of comings and goings where images have particular protective power, situated in the center of Augsburg on one of its main traffic routes.¹⁸



FIG. 2.2. Sigmund Grimm, *Barfußerturm und-Tor*. This eighteenth-century engraving of the Franciscans' Gate clearly shows that it was ornamented with pictures. However, the image was on the right-hand side of the gate facing outward and so cannot be seen here. (Grafische Sammlung der Kunstsammlungen und Museen Augsburg)

This was not all. Augsburg historians claimed that the city's pre-Roman inhabitants had been worshippers of Cisa, a pagan goddess of fertility. The fifteenth-century copy of the Meisterlin's chronicle by Hektor Müllich includes an illustration in his hand of Cisa, and there is a different version of the scene by an unknown artist in another copy of the chronicle, too.¹⁹ A popular festival commemorated her with an annual procession on St. Michael's Eve.²⁰ Sixteenth-century humanists, fascinated by the Roman and pre-Roman legacy of the town, were very interested in her cult. In the late sixteenth century, the Strasbourger Johannes Fischart lumped both traditions together, poking fun at the city's pride in its "Cisa whipped by the Amazons," and in the 1587 *Faustbuch*, when Mephistopheles takes Faust on his tour of southern German cities, he lists Augsburg's varied names, including "the city of Cisa," or Cisara.²¹ Clemens Sender, our Catholic chronicler, noted in 1536 how, to his excitement, an ancient head was excavated, held by cognoscenti to be a statue of Cisa herself. This image was that of a woman with snakes curling around her head; in other words, an image which could also be read as that of a witch.²²

By the late sixteenth century, Cisa's cult took something of a knock with the work of the patrician and enthusiastic local historian Marcus Welser. He was scathing about any attempts to trace the city back to the

Amazons or to Cisa and her worshippers, preferring to see the city's origins in the classical Roman town alone. In his 1595 *Chronica* and in his illustrated list of Augsburg antiquities, he notes the existence of one such head of Cisa over the gate of the church of St. Ulrich and Afra, with wings on its forehead and snakes curled around the head and neck (clearly identical with the one which Sender had described in his chronicle) ([fig. 2.3](#)).²³ He was certain, however, that this was actually a Medusa head and of Roman origin. He was equally adamant that another huge stone in the churchyard, showing a head placed beneath the Stadtpir, the civic emblem of Augsburg, had nothing to do with Cisa, either ([fig. 2.4](#)). The city “pear” or “berry” was a pinecone, he maintained, and it was just a common Roman way-marker sign.²⁴ He dismissed the story of the woman who terrified Attila as yet another fable without historical foundation.²⁵

But though Welser, a proponent of scientific historical method, remained unconvinced, popular tradition continued to maintain that the cult of Cisa was an important part of Augsburg's history. As he complained, believers in Cisa insisted on linking the goddess to the town's civic emblem, the Stadtpir, a pinecone-, berry-, or pear-shaped object. The Stadtpir was stamped on all cloth woven in Augsburg that had been approved by the town cloth inspectors, and on every piece of metalwork; it remains proof of provenance to this day. It also adorns the magnificent seventeenth-century town hall and civic banners. Those whom Welser condemned maintained that it stood for fertility and immortality, and so, one might add, from their point of view it was logical to connect it with Cisa, the goddess of fertility, sometimes taken by Augsburg's antiquarians to be a version of Ceres, the goddess of fruitfulness, or Cybele, the earth mother. As symbols of fertility, Cisa and the Stadtpir were fitting representations for the town's prosperity; and to those who believed that she was part of the town's past, it made perfect sense that her image should have been coupled with that of the Stadtpir on the giant statue in St. Ulrich and Afra's churchyard.²⁶



FIG. 2.3. Head of Cisa, or Medusa. From Marcus Welser, *Chronica. Der Weitberümpften Keyserlichen Freyen vnd dess H. Reichss Statt Augsburg in Schwaben/Von derselben altem Vrsprung*, trans. and ed. Engelbert Werlich (Augsburg, 1595), 4. (Staatsbibliothek Berlin)

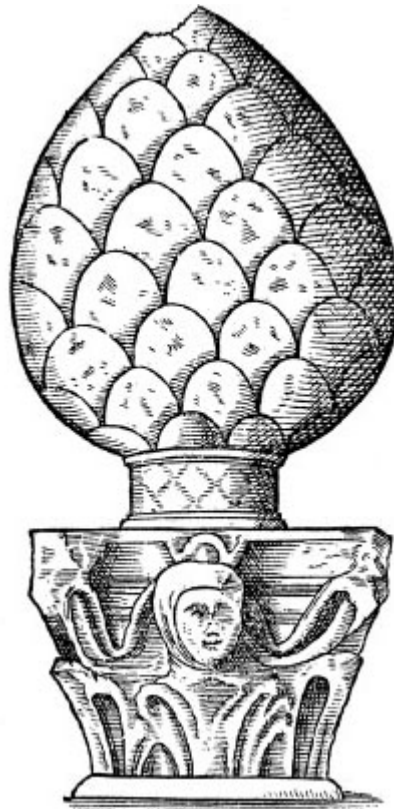


FIG. 2.4. Augsburg's civic emblem, the Stadtpir, with female head. From Marcus Welser, *Chronica*, trans. and ed. Engelbert Werlich (Augsburg, 1595), 25. The city "pear" or "berry" was a pinecone, Welser maintained, and it was just a common Roman way-marker sign. He dismissed the story of the woman who terrified Attila as yet another fable without historical foundation. (Staatsbibliothek Berlin)

These rival traditions continued to leave their mark on the civic landscape. In 1615, Elias Holl, humanist and civic patriot, the architect who transformed the city to create its current Renaissance skyline, was raising the height of the Perlach Tower to match that of his splendid new town hall ([fig. 2.5](#)). The Perlach was the central civic watchtower of the town, the closest thing to the city's political heart: there the storm bell would be rung to summon citizens in any emergency. What symbol did Holl choose to adorn his newly raised Perlach Tower? None other than the visage of the goddess he called Circe, thus bringing together the idea of Cisa and the enchantress. She was the emblem which, in his view, should adorn the highest point of the town and its symbolic political apex. Up she went when the tower was complete, and the celebratory drink, he noted in his diary, was the "highest" he had ever enjoyed.^{[27](#)}

Ceres-Circe-Cybele-Cisa-Medusa: the confusion of which Welser complained is evident in the city's chronicles; indeed, the Augsburg iconography of Cisa consistently included wings on her head and snakes around her neck.^{[28](#)} But while Ceres, Cybele, and Cisa were goddesses of fertility, the snake-haired goddess Medusa was a Gorgon whose gaze turned men to stone; and Circe was an enchantress who reveled in turning men into beasts. They were witches, and witches killed infants, attacked nursing mothers, and made men impotent. Fertility goddess and witch: these images of womanhood could not be more opposed to one another. So how could Augsburgers confuse Cisa and Circe?

The answer to this question goes to the heart of the nature of witchcraft and of symbolism, for the figure of the witch was fundamentally ambivalent. Circe could be a malign witch, or she could be an alluring enchantress who represented transformations of all kinds.^{[29](#)} The same ambivalence is evident in the figure of Diana herself, goddess of the moon, who was frequently associated with witchcraft. She is the pitiless huntress who kills the man who sees her naked by turning his own dogs on him. Yet she was also the goddess to whom childless women turned for aid, a fact which classically educated Augsburgers would have known. Like many powerful Christian symbols, the figure of the witch apparently has a single moral value: she is evil. But the pagan symbols which Christianity took over were richly ambiguous, and could represent both fertility and its destruction. The traces of this ambiguity were carried over into Western Christian understandings of the witch.



FIG. 2.5. Circe atop the Perlach Tower. Augsburg, Germany, 1650. (The Granger Collection, New York)

Indeed, the ambivalent nature of fertility itself was also evident in related symbols of pagan origin. Pre-Christian symbolism linked fire with fertility. At the summer solstice, fires were lit on mountaintops to ensure the ongoing warmth of the sun which would make the earth fruitful. Courting couples would jump over the fire, and burning wheels would be rolled downhill. Christian clerics inveighed against such practices, condemning the pagan survivals they encountered as superstition; and town councils regularly banned these events. As we saw in [chapter 1](#), seventeenth-century etchings and woodcuts of witches show mountains, for they were well known as the places where diabolic sabbaths were held. Sometimes they show fires in the foreground, where witches are burned to death for their crimes. But some later images show fires on top of mountains, linking the idea of the witch to the idea of midsummer fires. Once again, beneath the moral message is a much more complex indirect association of witches with fire and fertility.³⁰

When sixteenth-and seventeenth-century intellectuals began to explore their pre-Christian and classical heritage, they were also able to play with the ambiguity surrounding the figure of the witch. She could be an emblem for jealousy, for metamorphosis in alchemy, or could be closely allied to figures of the Fates and to ideas of the future. Hans Baldung Grien's woodcut of the three Fates closely resembles his images of witches, as the three naked women of three different ages cluster

around the thread of life. These images were not necessarily negative. When popular tradition in Augsburg mixed up Cisa, Ceres, Cybele, Circe, and Medusa, it created a composite that reproduced the ambiguity of the classical figure of the witch.

...

WITCHCRAFT HAD long been linked with womanhood, and witches embodied the ultimate in feminine evil, hardly suitable figures to represent a city. How does the figure of the classical witch relate to prosecutions for witchcraft in Augsburg? Though witch-hunting was not unknown, the tales related by Sender and Peutingner date from 1534 and 1515 respectively, before the period of the great European witch hunt. In the early sixteenth century, Hans Baldung Grien was producing his extraordinary erotic images of witchcraft for an audience of burghers and clerics in Strasbourg, another of the great southern German towns; and Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg's engravings and woodcuts of witches were widely distributed. Witches were figures of allure and danger, creatures of myth and legend, but not yet real and present threats in the city of Augsburg.^{[31](#)}

Augsburg saw no witch hunt during the years of the witch craze itself, though the area surrounding the city ruled by the bishop of Augsburg saw very serious persecution in the 1590s. In the city, there were trials of magicians, fortune-tellers, and practitioners of love magic, but none were executed. Even at the height of the local regional witch craze, the Augsburg Council dealt mildly with a self-styled village prophet who saw angels and attempted to heal animals with blessings: elsewhere, this man would probably have been suspected of witchcraft and executed, but the Augsburg Council concluded he was just mentally disturbed and sent him home with a warning.^{[32](#)}

Not until 1625 did the Council execute a woman for witchcraft, a dramatic case involving a mother and daughter. But there were no further executions in Augsburg before 1650, and, like many of the major imperial southern German cities, Augsburg avoided the kind of persecutions seen in some nearby Catholic and Protestant territories, places like Würzburg, Bamberg, or Trier, where thousands died.^{[33](#)} Augsburgers knew about witchcraft, that witches deserved to die, and that the Devil seduced Christians. But the city was reluctant to prosecute, and used torture sparingly, wary of breaking the suspect with systematic application. The Augsburg Council was more concerned about the danger

of judging unjustly than it was about witchcraft.

All this changed in the second half of the seventeenth century. As the city recovered from the devastation of the Thirty Years' War, which resulted in its population dropping by a half, Augsburg witnessed a series of dramatic trials for witchcraft. These never amounted to a full-scale panic, but more than thirty individuals were caught up in witch trials, and seventeen were executed for the crime.

These witch trials took place in a very different religious environment. At the start of the century, Augsburg had been a bi-confessional town, with a Catholic elite facing a largely Protestant population; by 1700, the two confessions had roughly equal numbers, and by 1720, the original position had been reversed, as Catholics gradually became the majority and a small group of elite Protestant merchants crystallized among the Lutherans.³⁴ The city was also facing economic and political decline. Catholic Bavaria did well out of the Thirty Years' War, emerging as a major player within the empire, whereas Augsburg never really recovered. Gone were its sixteenth-century glory days, when the city could see itself as a match for Bavaria. Munich was now a center for court patronage, culture, and craft, and the money of the Augsburg Fugger and Welser firms no longer ruled the world.

Catholics and Protestants alike were found guilty of witchcraft in Augsburg, and both denominations were exercised by the power of the Devil in their midst. In the 1670s and 1680s, Lutheran preachers published tracts about witches, including witches in Augsburg itself. Christoph Ehinger went into print with his account of a possessed cobbler, and Gottlieb Spitzel wrote a volume entitled *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß* (The Power of Darkness Broken), which discussed a series of notorious cases of witchcraft, including that of the child witches of Mora in Sweden.³⁵ The case of another demoniac, Regina Schiller, had come before the Lutheran Synod in the town, and the Lutheran church had said public prayers for several boys who had reputedly been caught dealing with the Devil. Catholics, for their part, had also been involved in dramatic exorcisms: Capuchins and Jesuits had exorcised a young boy in 1660, and Catholic hell-fire preaching against Protestants frequently mentioned the Devil. By the second half of the seventeenth century, then, many Augsburgers would have had a vivid sense of the Devil and of the malign intentions of witches. There were regular denunciations of witches and no shortage of witnesses to testify against those accused.³⁶

It is not so surprising, perhaps, that Augsburgers in the sixteenth

century could play with the idea of the witch. Cisa, Agnes, and the nameless woman warrior against Attila the Hun were civic talismans, women who could stand alongside the city's patron saint, St. Afra, who had been a prostitute before converting to Christianity and becoming a martyr.³⁷ Augsburg's choice of heroes reflected pride in its own history. Its stress upon its Roman and pre-Roman past served its hopes in the late sixteenth century of allying itself with the idea of the empire and creating a niche for itself as a venue for Imperial diets. But it is harder to see what sense Augsburger a century later could make of the witches who populated their history, and whose traces could still be seen on the town's buildings. How could they square this heroic view of witches with actively persecuting witches in their midst?

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THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY saw continued interest in chronicling the town's past, and its colorful Amazons and goddesses; while the city archive and library are full of handwritten chronicles listing famous criminals who met their just deserts, including the seventeen witches who were burned between 1650 and 1700 and who are all individually named. Agnes Bernauer was not forgotten: Gabriel Bucelinus's *Germania Topo*, published in Augsburg in 1655, lists the story of the "innocent" girl drowned by Duke Ernst, while Johann Ludwig Gottfried's *Historical Chronicle*, published in Frankfurt in 1657, has a dig at the Bavarians with the story of Ernst's "Bavarian excess," drowning Agnes "in good old Bavarian fashion."³⁸ And the Augsburg artist Melchior Küsel (1629–1681) produced a charming copper engraving of her in seventeenth-century costume, her lovely hair curling down onto her shoulders as she gazes modestly out at the viewer, the picture of youth and innocence (fig. 2.6): he evidently saw a market for such a single-sheet image.³⁹

Agnes's story moved into the sphere of high art when, in 1679, Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau's *Heldenbriefe* were published, poems which reworked Ovid's original to present exchanges of letters between fifteen famous lovers. Agnes "Bernin" and Duke "Ungenand," Duke Anonymous, feature as one of the couples. Hofmann was from Breslau, not from Augsburg, and his representation of Agnes retains something of Peutinger's sharp tone, as he notes that Agnes would probably have been as dab a hand with the scepter as her barber-father was with the razor (*Fliette*). Hofmann's version loses none of the original detail and extends the story considerably. He also hints knowingly at sorcery, assuring us

that Agnes's memory "swims above the water" though she was drowned in a sack, a reference to the test for witchcraft. Moreover, he has Agnes explicitly assert that nothing she did earned her death by fire: fire was the punishment for witches, and when Agnes makes her bold denial, Hofmann reminds his readers of the aspersion that she was a witch.⁴⁰ Hofmann's poetic cycle is a major baroque lyric, known across Germany, and though his sympathies clearly lie with the innocent Agnes rather than the vacillating Albrecht, she remains a complex figure whom others believed to be a witch.



FIG. 2.6. Melchior Küsel, *Agnes Bernauer*, ca. 1650–55. (Grafische Sammlung der Kunstsammlungen und Museen Augsburg)

The tradition of Cisa, too, remained alive. Even the Pietist Gottlieb Spitzel began his manuscript history of religion in Augsburg by discussing the town's pagan past.⁴¹ The witch who scared Attila the Hun apparently retained her place in civic saga as well, and in 1690, Christian Stridtbeck of Augsburg included a picture of the image that graced the Barfüßer Thor in his Leipzig dissertation "De sagis": Stridtbeck said that she was popularly believed to have been a witch, an opinion he aimed to refute.⁴² Eberhard David Hauber was struck by the story, and picked it up in his eighteenth-century magpie collection *Biblioteca: Acta et scripta magica* (Library: Deeds and Writings of Magic); he prefaces part 8 with a striking copy of the 1690 image, her hair flying and her thin, muscular

arms raised.⁴³ Paul von Stetten used the very same image in his *Geschichte der Heiligen Römischen Reichsstadt Augsburg* (History of Augsburg) in 1743, and also tells her story,⁴⁴ and even David Langenmantel's less colorful history of the government of Augsburg from 1734 at least found room to mention how Augsburg was fortified by the Amazons in 1030 BC.⁴⁵

The complexities of Augsburgers' attitudes to witchcraft in this period are even evident in such an apparently conventional work of demonology as Gottlieb Spitzel's *The Power of Darkness Broken*. This remarkable treatise was animated by the Pietist Spitzel's conviction that many souls were caught in the snares of the real Devil, and that spiritual war must be waged to free them from his power. But Spitzel also averred that some elements of witchcraft were not real, and that children's fantasies should not always be believed. The book mentioned several Augsburg witches, especially three women executed in 1685, who had seduced a young boy: in the grip of the Devil he had burned his stepmother's house to the ground, as "everyone in Augsburg knew."⁴⁶

The book also has several illustrations that show how far taste had moved away from conventional images of witches and Devils. The frontispiece presents a truly bizarre Devil with a horselike head, and another with horns and prominent ears, while other images show equally lurid Devils. These are creatures of nightmare, and the artist associates the diabolic with masks, animal-human mixtures, and the monstrous (see the [chapter 6](#) illustrations). One of these images is familiar ([fig. 2.7](#)). It features a huge mountain, and at its foot a Devil stands with fire in each hand and on his head. In the foreground, a line of witches wait to perform the diabolic kiss on a goat. This is, in fact, a reworking of an image that had adorned the title page of Johann Praetorius's famous *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*, of 1669, which was itself based, as we saw in [chapter 1](#), on the left-hand half of an etching by Michael Heer and Matthäus Merian from 1626. Praetorius's collection was a work of entertainment, not a demonological tract, and it contained puzzles, Latin treatises, games based on the letters of Blocksberg, and even a description of the author's ascent of the Blocksberg. Its frontispiece is a pastiche of demonic clichés, designed to titillate as well as shock: adult and child witches queue to kiss the Devil-Goat's backside, while in the foreground, a comic-looking Devil defecates into a pot. The *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* was so well known that it hardly seems likely its readers would not have recalled its frontispiece. Pirating it here struck a potentially skeptical note in what was, on the surface at least, a

credulous work.⁴⁷

Nor were images of witches confined to civic chronicles. Johann Heinrich Schönfeld produced a marvelously atmospheric image entitled *The Witch of Endor*, a revised version of an engraving in pen and brush, and painted a picture of the same subject ([fig. 2.8](#)). Schönfeld was a Lutheran who had established himself in Augsburg and strongly influenced other local painters; we know of his painting only through a note on the drawing. It dates from sometime after 1670 and shows a witch with the gnarled, skinny body of an old woman, the familiar, established iconography of the witch. But the mood of the image is different. The witch has overlong arms, emphasized by the dramatic shadows they cast, and she stands within a circle holding a wand. Saul kneels in terror, while above, graves dominate the scene. The picture evokes the morbid mood of the graveyard, and there is nothing realistic about the distorted, wraithlike witch, who is more akin to a specter than a local witch. Gabriel Ehinger, Schönfeld's pupil, produced the final version of the design as an etching. The painting was executed for David Thomann, the Augsburg legal advisor to the Council, and either this or another of a similar subject was owned by a Catholic Augsburg cathedral canon. Evidently, a witchcraft scene could interest collectors of both denominations.⁴⁸

At about this time, Joseph Werner, a Catholic, was also producing a remarkable series of etchings of treasure seekers and specters ([figs. 2.9](#) and [2.10](#)). His etiolated, ethereal figures stalk the pictures, evoking the eerie in a manner that has nothing of the fleshiness of earlier representations of witches. The technique allows Werner to suggest beings who are neither human nor ghost, male nor female, but somewhere in between. They haunt chapels and emerge from tombs, in representations that owe a good deal to the Counter-Reformation fascination with the Roman catacombs that were being looted to provide new, authenticated saints' bones. Columns and temples provide classical allusions, hinting at the connection between magic, paganism, and past civilizations.⁴⁹ He also produced a set of images of enchantresses, including Medea, probably during his time in Augsburg.⁵⁰ We know that such images were produced for the Augsburg elite, the same intermarried group of families who also dominated the Council, which was at this time persecuting witches. At the height of Augsburg's witch hunt, then, other attitudes toward witches as figures of mystery, harbingers of the uncanny, revenants from past civilizations, or monsters could coexist with belief in witches as agents of the Devil who deserved death.



FIG. 2.7. Illustration from Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß* (Augsburg, 1687), 207. (By permission of the British Library [8632.b.23])



FIG. 2.8. Johann Heinrich Schönfeld and Gabriel Ehinger, *Saul spricht mit Samuels Geist bei der Hexe von Endor* (Saul Speaks to Samuel's Ghost with the Witch of Endor), ca. 1670. (Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung [C 517])

...

HOW CAN WE explain the varied incarnations of the figure of the witch in Augsburg, and what do they tell us about female representations of the city? In the sixteenth century, an interest in women who might be regarded as witches flourished, as part of the humanist engagement in chronicling the city's past and unearthing its pre-Christian origins. These witchlike female figures stood for fertility, metamorphosis, and fruitfulness as well as for untrammelled destructive feminine power. There were those, like Marcus Welser, who found all this unscholarly,

confused, and misguided; and it is instructive that he found the conflation of Medusa with Cisa so difficult to stomach. Before the mid-seventeenth century, when the city fathers had not begun to prosecute witches in earnest, images like these were not threatening. They could contain ambiguities about female power at a time when Protestants were starting to downplay the role of the Virgin and of female saints. With the rise of the Counter-Reformation and the renewed emphasis on the cult of the Virgin and of Augsburg's own saints, Afra and Hilaria among them, the power of feminine spiritual figures was one of the issues that distinguished the two denominations most sharply. Yet both confessions, apparently, could see a worthy predecessor in such female figures as Agnes, the Amazons, Cisa, or the witch who scared Attila the Hun; and they feature in popular histories of the city to this day.

It is more difficult to explain the continued presence of these images, and their transformations during the second half of the seventeenth century, when witches were being hunted in the town. Executions of witches were always public events, and they powerfully dramatized the virtue of the city fathers, who demonstrated their claim to be just judges carrying out God's will as they presided over the burnings of Satan's minions, the witches. The witch's body was burned so that there could be nothing to bury, the ultimate enactment of her exclusion from the community. As respectable women and men testified against the witches in their midst, there could hardly be more polarized versions of femininity: good matrons versus bad witches. Yet at the same time as these executions apparently dramatized the power of male order in the face of real feminine evil, other images of witchcraft were circulating whose moral messages were far less clear. Witches and demons could be pagan survivals, strange half-animal creatures, disembodied wraiths, or even bogies with which to scare children. Witches were not excised from the old pantheon of Augsburg's local heroes; and indeed, if anything, the late-seventeenth-century image of Agnes Bernauer as a tragically wronged beauty was more positive than ever.



FIG. 2.9. Joseph Werner, *Vier Grabräubern erscheint ein Geist* (A Spirit Appears to Four Grave Robbers), ca. 1670–80. (Staatsbibliothek Berlin [52310])



FIG. 2.10. Joseph Werner, *Zauberkünste der Medea. Mänade, von Dämon umflattert, tröpfelt Wachs in eine Schale* (The Arts of Enchantment of Medea / Maenads, Surrounded by Demons, Drops Wax into a Bowl). 35.1 × 22.2 cm. Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. (Staatsbibliothek Berlin [Kdz. 7636])

Christianity might strive to impose one meaning on the witch, and secular authorities might attempt to propagate clear divisions between the male political sphere and the unruly feminine world. But there was always a richer set of meanings deriving from classical and pagan traditions on which artists, poets, and historians alike could draw. This suggests that we cannot understand the significance of the figure of the witch if we interpret her using the framework of discourse. An analysis of discourses would derive the meaning of the witch from her place within a binary system of opposites, her meaning determined by her place

within a wider linguistic context.⁵¹ Such an approach, however, will not help us fully to grasp her significance, because she did not have a single determinate meaning.

Instead, we need to analyze the witch as a symbolic figure. Symbols can shape contrary emotions and contradictory historical tales into a single whole, allowing ambivalence to find expression. They can be exempted from the rules of logic, and they permit their audiences to run the risk of identifying with them, at least temporarily, allowing them access to parts of themselves which they might not otherwise admit: this was why proud Agnes, who broke the rules of class and femininity, could be a compelling heroine. And symbols can stand for elemental forces, things which are greater than human. The witch embodied a fundamental contradiction, for she could represent both fertility and its destruction, life and death, energy and entropy. As Medusa, she turned men to stone; as Cisa, she ensured fertility and prosperity; as Circe, she made men mad with love. Her image looked down from the town hall and guarded those who passed under her gate, while Agnes the bath maid and the hag who saved Augsburg stood for the resilience and courage of the whole community. Just as communities needed the figure of the virago, who broke the taboos of class and sex, to unleash the forces required to protect the town; just as, in premodern riots, women's political action was virtually *de rigueur* because it supplied the conclusive demonstration that order was overturned,⁵² so also the figure of the witch was a symbolic necessity.

It is not easy to tell how the classical figure of the witch related to the poor, unglamorous women who found themselves accused of witchcraft. Agnes Bernauer's enduring popularity suggests that even when Augsburgers believed that witches were real and present threats who must be excised from the community, they could still count the "Angel" among their own. Did they remember the wrinkled hag who saved the city from Attila when they muttered against the old women they thought were witches? Or think of Cisa's double nature when they worried about why young mothers accused older women of killing their babies? Most probably, these images were never consciously related to the women whose dreadful crimes were read out at the place of execution. Augsburg's tradition of guardian witches granted it no immunity from the murderous passions of witch-hunting. Or at least not in the late seventeenth century.

The early modern commune was premised on the idea that women could not be orderly political actors, and that political capacity,

symbolized in the ability to carry weapons, was a purely male preserve. But political systems require women, for without them, there can be no reproduction and no future. This was why the figure of the witch was needed: she expressed what could not be contained in words.

Chapter Three

DÜRER'S EMPTY FRAME

IN THE Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg stands a gigantic, exquisitely carved sixteenth-century wooden picture frame, completely empty. Taking advantage of an irresistible photo opportunity, you can stand on the other side and be pictured looking through, a modern masterpiece in your very own Renaissance frame ([fig. 3.1](#)).

Albrecht Dürer designed the frame, which forms part of the museum's 2004–9 display entitled *Faszination Meisterwerk*. One of the certified masterpieces of Renaissance Nuremberg, carved by superior craftsmen from the golden age of Tilman Riemenschneider and Veit Stoss, it has been cleaned to remove the dark varnish, revealing the natural wood and scraps of paint underneath. The new, airy, light-filled gallery shows it to best advantage. Yet the vacant frame teases the viewer: What are we doing when we immerse ourselves in the culture of Renaissance Germany? Will we always just see ourselves?

The frame has an elaborate iconographic program. Atop sits Christ in Majesty, flanked by Mary and John the Baptist. Below them is a frieze depicting the Last Judgment: on one side, the saved march to Paradise; on the other, a group of sinners chained by a Devil with a three-pronged phallus are driven toward the jaws of Hell ([fig. 3.2](#)). Exposed and naked, each figure wears incongruous headgear: a papal tiara, cardinal's hat, bishop's miter, and imperial crown. Pope, bishop, emperor, and cardinal: even the rulers of this world, the image tells us, lay and clerical alike, will pay for their sins in Hell. At either end of the troupe of the damned is a female figure. One, a buxom matron with ample hips and a full stomach, is in her child-bearing prime; her counterpart is old and withered, with sagging breasts and loose, snakelike hair, an old hag past her fertile years. Both women raise an arm high, so that the group of the

damned seems to be bounded by their mirrored gesture.^{[1](#)}



FIG. 3.1. *Rahmen des Allerheiligenbildes von Albrecht Dürer*, 1511, design by Dürer, 1508. (Photo courtesy of Charles Zika, by permission of Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg)

Why is this quartet of powerful men framed by two women? The gap-toothed open mouth of the old hag seems to suggest anger, a frightening emotion in a female ([fig. 3.3](#)). Her aggression is akin to sexual voraciousness, terrifying in an old woman. The snakelike hair, the shriveled breasts, and the powerful gesture resemble Dürer's *Witch Flying Backwards* of a decade before, and she is reminiscent, too, of the old witches depicted by Dürer's pupil Hans Baldung Grien. She seems to fit into a general interest in the figure of the witch in early-sixteenth-century German art, an interest that focused particularly on her body. The fecund matron at the other end of the group, her body pear-shaped like Dürer's massive female *Nemesis*, merely seems to underline the point that here were two extremes of female power, one representing luxuriant fertility, the other, the destruction of fruitfulness and of Christendom itself.



FIG. 3.2. Detail of [fig. 3.1.](#), showing a group being dragged to Hell. (Photo courtesy of Roland Kufner, by permission of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg)



FIG. 3.3. Detail of [fig. 3.1.](#), showing an old hag. (Photo courtesy of Roland Kufner, by permission of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum)

Yet in Dürer's surviving sketch, made three years before the frame was completed, the witch figure is missing and the figures are clothed. Evidently something about witchcraft was in the air, something that led to the reworking of Dürer's design.²

The frame, however, was only one small part of the whole work. The painting, which is no longer in the frame, has been variously interpreted as an Adoration of the Trinity, Augustine's City of God (Panofsky), All Saints, or more recently as a Eucharistic vision of blessedness ([fig. 3.4](#)).³ It shows God the Father surrounded by those who have been saved. One of Dürer's finest works, with a tightly coherent iconographic program, it was also intensely personal: down below on earth we see a self-portrait of the artist himself. The painting stood on the altar of the Landauer Chapel in Nuremberg, a charitable institution which housed twelve pious deserving old men, whose prayers in turn would assist the salvation of

the donor. Like Dürer in the painting, they could at the moment of communion share in the hope of the beatific vision of salvation. Around the chapel was a series of stained glass windows, also designed by Dürer. The altarpiece at its center thus links together the deserving poor, the saints, the artist, and the donor in one community of salvation. The chapel and altar form a classic document of late-medieval communitarian civic religion, the world that would be shattered forever just a few years later by Luther's Reformation.

While the picture depicts Heaven, the frame is about this world, indeed, about Nuremberg itself. The Last Judgment frieze is closely modeled on the frieze above the entrance to one of the city's two major churches, that of St. Lorenz, a reference which would not have been lost on Nurembergers. A group of sinners, including pope, cardinal, bishop and emperor, are distinguished by their headgear. Two female figures can also be made out, one with a wimple, the other with plaited hair. It is a marvelously subversive representation: pope, cardinal, bishop, and monarch are all bound for Hell, and not even power and position can protect the sinner. This sculpture, more than a century old when Dürer knew it, was his inspiration, but just as significant is what Dürer does with it. By making his figures naked, Dürer greatly increased the shock value of the scene, and he added a dramatic central figure, whose slanting body bridges the saved and the damned. He is in the very act of being snatched from the group heading to Paradise to be dragged toward Hell, a dire warning to the viewer.



FIG. 3.4. Albrecht Dürer, *Allerheiligenbild*, or *The Adoration of the Holy Trinity* (with frame), Landauer Altar, 1511. Oil on poplar wood, 135 × 123.4 cm. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna [GG 838])

The painting, as Panofsky pointed out, needs to be viewed through the frame, which shapes its meaning: the vision of the saints which the painting represents can happen only after the Last Judgment, the theme of the frame. Indeed, the relationship between the two media is fascinatingly dialectical. The painting presents a multipoint perspective, giving the impression of depth and weightlessness though it is actually a flat surface; the frame is in relief but pretends to be a border without depth or perspective. The painting excludes Hell, and depicts clothed, ethereally gracious beings; in the frame, grotesque demons endowed with ludicrously gothic private parts raunchily prod their sexy-bottomed

captives. It is as if the gothic repressed has been confined to the realm of the earthly, of Nuremberg, pushed out of the beatific vision of the picture.

Its elaborate devotional program having been made redundant by the Reformation, the painting was bought in 1585 by Rudolf II, a man who, like Dürer, was a melancholic, a condition believed to be closely related to creativity. Seeing no need for the cumbersome frame, Rudolf — or his agent — took only the painting. No longer a devotional object, the picture became a work of art for Rudolf's gallery in Prague; while the frame remained a curio, an unintended emblem of the city's eclipse. It was even cut in half until, in the nineteenth century, when Germanic art of the Renaissance was rediscovered in the wake of developing nationalism, the two pieces were finally reunited and housed in the new Germanic museum, the showcase of German culture.⁴

So why should it have made sense to Dürer to include a witchlike creature in the frame; and why did he put her in the section of this highly complex work of imagery that referred to Nuremberg itself? As we saw, there are many depictions of witches in the northern European art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries;⁵ and they became a popular subject in part because they licensed artists to depict the naked female. But the witch in this example is not erotic, and she is hidden away in a corner. Dürer was not the only painter to produce what one might term a “marginal” witch, a hag figure concealed in an image with a broader program. Rubens included several such hag-like figures in his cycle honoring Marie de Medici. Indeed, one of Dürer's portraits, that of a young man painted in 1507, has a striking image on the back: an old hag with one sagging breast exposed rummages in her sack of gold ([fig. 3.5](#)). Normally hidden from view (though now shown off in a special double-sided glass case at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna), only its owner would know the moral message: behind him lurks the danger of avarice and envy.⁶

Dürer's image for the frame of the Last Judgment was soon copied; indeed, he himself transposed his design for the frame into a woodcut, which then circulated widely in the medium of print. The naked figures of the damned are visible at the bottom right of the woodcut, and the hag-like figure is prominent among those chained by the Devil. In turn, this design was copied by artists such as Virgil Solis and Erhard Schön, but with significant alterations: Schön's woodcut version of the scene omitted the damned, while Solis condensed them so that the old woman is no longer clearly identifiable as a hag. There are even midcentury

versions of the image by artists such as Hans Weigel or Georg Scharfenberg; and a woodcut by Matthias Gerung of 1544 has visual borrowings from Dürer but again, no witch. Dürer's design thus had a long and public life which was not restricted to the frame alone. But his image was censored: crowns, miters, hats, and tiara are gone, the figures face us so that we no longer see their bottoms, and our hag is only just visible.

So why did Dürer — or the craftsmen who carved the frame of the altarpiece — add in a witch to the judgment scene? There is no simple explanation in terms of the witch craze. Nuremberg never executed a witch. And Dürer's images were produced a good fifty years before the height of the witch craze. It was not that witch-hunting was unknown — in the region around Strasbourg, where Dürer's pupil Hans Baldung Grien was producing his visions of witches, there had been many trials for witchcraft — but it was certainly not the present, ubiquitous danger that it represented in the second half of the sixteenth century.



FIG. 3.5. Albrecht Dürer, *Brustbild eines jungen Mannes*, Rückseite, 1507.

The reverse side of a painting of a young man depicts an old, semi-naked woman with a sack of gold as an allegory of Vanitas or Avaritia.

Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

(Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna [GG 849])

As we have seen, Renaissance culture was becoming increasingly fascinated by the figure of the witch that developed out of two parallel tendencies: the new fascination with female nude, and the revival of the

classics. Dürer's Last Judgment hag is no classical witch. Rather, she testifies to the extent to which, in a town like Nuremberg, the witch and the whore could be understood as the twin images of evil femininity, so firmly fixed as a pair of cultural types that Dürer could interpolate them into his design. So where his model, the frieze of St. Lorenz, offered four clearly distinguishable male figures of cardinal, monarch, bishop, and pope which Dürer could simply take over, he tightened the iconographic message by representing the women as similarly distinct "types." Dürer gives the whole set of the damned a powerful sexual charge, in contrast to the monumental, clothed, and disciplined bodies of the saved. Not only does Dürer sexualize the female figures, but the positioning of the buttocks of the male figures strongly hints that they are sodomites, a subject he had earlier explored in his sketch of Orpheus as "the first bugger" (*der Erst puseran*).⁷ The result is that where the St. Lorenz frieze presented the most powerful estates of this world as among the sinners bound for Hell, Dürer picks out their lasciviousness as their most damning sin. The women of the Nuremberg frieze have been turned into hag and wench because this was the most effective way to sexualize the image and express the essential wickedness of women.

But this does not exhaust the meaning of the witch in Dürer's oeuvre. There are other "hidden witches," which suggests her many resonances. One in particular relates, as does the *Allerheiligenaltar*, to Dürer's understanding of his own identity and his standing as an artist. Just over a decade after he produced the Landauer altarpiece, Dürer designed murals to decorate the walls of Nuremberg's new and imposing Renaissance town hall in 1522. This was a very important political commission, and among the classical scenes chosen was an allegorical painting entitled *The Calumny against Innocence*, which was situated in a prominent visual position on the north wall of the Great Hall where the city court met. The frescoes themselves are lost. They were repainted in the early seventeenth century by four artists, three of whom specialized in imitating Dürer's style, restored in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and destroyed by bombing in 1945.⁸ Dürer's sketches for the work survive, annotated by his close friend the Nuremberg humanist and city secretary Willibald Pirckheimer, who (since Dürer lacked a classical education) probably provided much of the artist's information about classical subjects.⁹ The subject is Dürer's reconstruction of a lost painting by Apelles, known only through a description by Lucian ([fig. 3.6](#)). The story describes how Apelles's rival Antiphilus slandered Apelles to King Midas, alleging he was plotting to kill him. Dragged before Midas,

Apelles was condemned to death, but at the last moment the slander was unmasked. The only compensation Apelles demanded was to be allowed to create an image that would immortalize the scene.



FIG. 3.6. Albrecht Dürer, *The Calumny of Apelles*, design for the west part of the north wall of the large Council Chamber, inscriptions by Willibald Pirckheimer. (Albertina, Vienna [3177])

This subject was well known: Dürer's version may owe more than a little to Mantegna's treatment of the story.¹⁰ The Italian artist was one of the great influences on Dürer — his picture of Orpheus as the first sodomite also derived from Mantegna, while Dürer's image of the witch as an old woman with sagging breasts and muscular arms in *Witch Riding Backwards on a Goat* (engraving ca. 1500) is reminiscent of the figure of Envy in Mantegna's engraving entitled *Battle of the Sea Gods*.¹¹ But where the Italian artist's *Calumny* depicted envy as a female figure in the prime of life, Dürer replaced her with a gaunt, wrinkled old woman, a heavy purse slung low at her side.¹² She is not a witch, for her head is covered, but the image clearly draws on the topos, strengthening at this time, that Envy (Invidia) is a hag.¹³

At one level, this warning against calumny was an eminently suitable subject for a courtroom. But it was also a bold and personal artistic statement, for here, in the political heart of Nuremberg, where Dürer's own friends and political allies, the town councillors, would see it on a daily basis, was Dürer's re-creation of a lost masterpiece by the greatest artist of all time. In choosing such a subject, Dürer not only set himself up as a northern Mantegna, he proclaimed himself the modern Apelles.¹⁴ This was a painting about art itself. As Norman Bryson has pointed out, the allegory presents painting as superior to lying language. It is a bold statement of the importance of the artist, and it immortalized Dürer and his creative talents in the political center of the town.¹⁵

Nor was Dürer alone in being attracted to Mantegna's version of the

subject: Girolamo Mocetto's early engraving of 1504–6 is based closely on Mantegna's design but adds a view of Venice in the background — this is evidently the version which another contemporary of Dürer's, Jörg Breu the Elder, knew, for his sketch of the subject replaces the Italian town-scape with a distinctively German set of buildings, and gives Invidia a see-through upper garment, revealing her leathery teats.¹⁶ In 1534, the Nuremberg artist Peter Flötner produced a woodcut modeled loosely on Dürer's design, which transposed the allegorical figures of Truth, Jealousy, Calumny, and others into a complex set of architectural structures.¹⁷ Meanwhile, Mantegna's depiction continued to fascinate other artists: Pieter Breughel the Elder created an ink drawing of the scene, while Rembrandt himself did a sketch closely based on Mantegna's image.¹⁸

But the full possibilities of the witchlike dimensions of the figure of Envy were exploited by Federico Zuccaro and Cornelis Cort later in the century. Cort's complex engraving of the story from 1572 is based on a painting by Federico Zuccaro ([fig. 3.7](#)).¹⁹ Complete with a border of emblems and references, images within images, it shows the Vices whispering to Midas in a design that harks back to Mantegna and Dürer, as well as to another image by Botticelli. But now Envy has been moved forward to stand near Midas. She hovers in the background, her sagging breasts, open mouth, and snake-hair unmistakable, while, as if that were not enough, a toad crouches before her to complete the reference to witchcraft.²⁰

Why should a witchlike figure belong in an image about creativity and the nature of art? It was envy which led Apelles's rival to make a false accusation against him. At the level of allegory, the subject suggests that creativity itself must inevitably meet with an envious response — Apelles's rival cannot endure the fact that the artist's skill surpasses his own. The theme of envy emerges time and again in witchcraft, for the witch is someone who lacks creativity herself. She can only magically spoil the creativity of others, ruining crops, raising storms, and withering male potency.



FIG. 3.7. Cornelis Cort (Netherlandish, 1533/36–1578), based on painting by Federico Zuccaro (Italian, ca. 1542–1609), *The Calumny of Apelles*, 1572, engraving on ivory laid paper, 408 × 556 mm. (Print and Drawing Fund and Stanley Field Endowment, 1994.249, CITI Object ID: 131389, The Art Institute of Chicago; Photography © The Art Institute of Chicago)

In the work of artists like Baldung Grien, Rubens, and Dürer, witches lurk in the margins of images because they are able to represent evil parts of the self. All three artists also used witches as part of the way they understood creativity: Dürer, in his representation of Apelles; Baldung, in the bewitched groom; Rubens, the greatest poet of female fleshliness, in his self-conscious tribute to the tradition of German artists hidden away in his representation of Marie de Medici. The figure of the witch was so productive because it enabled artists to depict good and evil together, to excite repressed lusts, and to dramatize their own inner conflicts. She could represent Envy, she could evoke the evils of feminine allure, she could horrify with her murderous violence against children and kin, or she could conjure up a world of reverie, of wild landscapes, strange beasts, and creatures neither living nor dead. For poets and writers, she permitted them to explore fantasy, illusion, and imagination; and she pushed at the extremes of human experience, the territory of violence, cruelty, and deadly sex. This is why the figure of the witch was to play such a part in the development of painting, imaginative literature, and the novel itself.

But why was a woman's body needed to embody these ideas? Or, to

put this another way, why was the witch a woman? After all, in male form the Devil was already on hand to explore such themes, and yet he proved far less pliant or evocative than the figure of the witch. Even the Devil's physicality — his bisexuality, his animal features, and his grotesque hypermasculinity — was exotic rather than disturbing. There is one detail of Dürer's hag that I have left out, and that is the Devil's knifelike claw, poised to slice off her breast (see [fig. 3.3](#)). We know that midwives convicted of witchcraft might have their breasts pulled with glowing tongs as an additional torture before burning, a degradation that was performed in public. This cruel mutilation of the woman's breast — which must have been horrific to watch — was intended to proclaim that here was a woman who had perverted motherhood, abusing mothers' trust to steal their babies for the Devil. It also bears witness to a strand of extraordinary viciousness in sixteenth-and seventeenth-century culture that could be directed at women.

The figure of the witch allowed painters to develop eroticism. Like classical nudes, she permitted artists to portray nude women in a variety of poses, but she added the frisson of the satanic. Hans Baldung Grien went on to develop the possibilities of the figure of the witch that Dürer had brought into art. His first published woodcut after leaving Dürer's workshop was the chiaroscuro *Witches' Sabbath* of 1510, which self-consciously alludes to Dürer's work, and borrows visual motifs from it, too, especially his engraving of *The Witch* of 1501.²¹ In a series of images, many of which were intended for private viewing, Baldung went on to explore her transgressive sexuality: in his New Year's greeting card for a cleric, one witch's head pokes through her open legs while another touches her private parts; in his *Witches' Sabbath*, the witch spears phallic sausages on her pitchfork; in *Witch and Demon*, her buttocks are highlighted at the center of the image as the dragon's tongue reaches up to touch between her legs.²²

But much of that erotic charge had a very peculiar focus, at least so far as the modern viewer is concerned. These artists were obsessed not so much with the delights of female flesh as with the reproductive capacities of women's bodies. Dürer's and Baldung Grien's images both expressed a historically specific, erotically charged fascination with fertility — and not only with that. Both artists were fascinated by the opposite of fecundity, the sterile body of the old woman. The gnarled, shriveled body of the hag who lurks in all of Baldung's depictions of witches offers the ultimate truth of womanhood, inescapably present alongside the plump buttocks and full breasts of the young witches. She

is the figure whom Dürer and others made famous in depictions of Envy. Baldung's witches are not just objects of his desire. They embody an obsession with time and process in the female body, from the ripening sexuality of the woman who has not yet had children, through the luscious flesh of the matron, to the dried-up figure of the crone with her hard, unyielding teats. This is why his depictions of witches are so akin to his images of the Ages of Woman or to his portrayals of the Fates. Indeed, we might say that Baldung Grien's witches are less about the allure of sex than about mothers, aging, and menace.

The relationship with the breast and with the mother is the deepest of all human relationships. It is fundamentally connected with identity, for it is only gradually that the infant comes to perceive itself as separate from the mother, on whom it is utterly dependent. The mother's body can be terrifying: it can evoke the fear of loss of individuality, of psychic disintegration, and of being absorbed back into the womb. Something of this psychotic level of terror seems to me to suffuse Baldung's images.

Dürer set the parameters of the figure of the witch, and Baldung Grien's figures evidently worked out aspects of her psychic potential. In many of these images there is an element of violent aggression, especially toward the breast. And it is also striking that artists like Dürer and Baldung Grien, alongside Altdorfer, de Gheyn, and others, were repeatedly drawn to depict sagging breasts, often with leathery, hard teats.^{[23](#)} Their old women are not decrepit but upright, erect, and powerful, as if, by sloughing off maternity, these terrifying figures could command nature itself. Whether as Envy fingering her gold, as one of the Fates, or as the witch riding backward on a goat, the hag had become instantly recognizable. When Dürer slipped her into his image of the damned processing to the jaws of Hell, he was reflecting what was to become one of the most powerful and disturbing themes of sixteenth-century culture.

Chapter Four

ENVY

WHY ARE WE now so gripped by the history of emotions? The current interest reflects a general sense among historians that social and cultural history needs to try new directions, because the study of discourse has apparently led us into an impasse. The history of emotion seems to offer one way forward. While the linguistic turn taught us much about how to read sources, and vastly increased the kinds of documents historians now read and the issues they might explore, we reach an explanatory dead end once we try to account for why some discourses should prove particularly powerful at certain historical moments and not at others. If, as historians, we are still interested in questions of why things happened, we need to explain how language and ideas lead to action. But the study of discourses does not provide an account of psychology, or explain why some ideas lead people to behave in particular ways. The history of emotions by contrast offers to link psychology and action. It is perhaps a nice irony that, after Foucault's anti-Enlightenment stance, it should be to the Enlightenment and to Hume that we return, for in Hume's view, it is the passions which cause action.

The history of emotions is also on our agenda because it brings us hard up against the question of what is historical and socially constructed in human experience; and what is physiological. This is the rock on which gender history foundered in the 1990s. From the outset, feminist and gender historians had sought to get rid of the idea that biology is destiny, responding to a long-standing tradition of biological determinism. However, by the 1990s, the rising tide of genetic, neuro-physiological, and hormonal explanations of sexual difference made it difficult for gender historians to hold the line. The concept of gender itself, the foundation upon which the new women's history had been

built, came under attack as Judith Butler devastatingly showed that the distinction between sex and gender was untenable, and argued that sex was a constructed category, not a biological given.¹ For those who were interested in the connections between the physical experiences of being a woman and the meanings of femininity, this led to a conceptual deadlock. How could one go on doing gender history if one dared entertain the idea that human physiology was not entirely a social construction? The resulting crisis is one of the reasons why gender history is currently in something of a doldrums.² At the same time, a generation of gender historians who became mothers found it hard to insist that the differences between their girl and boy children were entirely socially constructed. Theories like psychoanalysis, to which many of this generation were attracted, also posited some fundamental differences between the sexes.

In this context, the history of emotions seems to offer us a way of having our cake and eating it, by bringing passion and emotion back into history but escaping the theoretical dogmatism that seems to be inherent in using psychoanalysis. Using concepts drawn from psychoanalysis seems to require us to subscribe to a particular theory of the mind that many do not accept; by contrast, the history of emotions apparently rests on no particular theory at all, making it attractive to historians who want to talk about areas of experience — loss, grief, trauma — with which psychoanalysis deals. And whereas psychoanalysis is good at explaining individual dilemmas, but less convincing when it turns to societies, the history of emotion sets out to describe collective, social states.

Though the history of emotions seems to be in many ways a new field, it is already developing a literature. Three recent examples of very different ways of approaching it merit discussion; and I shall examine them before turning to how the history of emotion might help us to understand one historical phenomenon, the witch hunt of western Europe. William Reddy's *The Navigation of Feeling* is perhaps the most daring and thoroughgoing attempt to develop the history of emotion in English, considering its anthropological and physiological as well as cultural aspects.³ Summarizing recent findings in experimental psychology, Reddy concludes that emotions are “inextricably intertwined” with cognition, and then daringly links these findings with anthropology to argue that societies collectively develop emotional regimes. Emotions are an “array of loosely linked thought material that tends to be activated simultaneously,” and that encompasses many acts and utterances. They are “performative” in that they help individuals

explore and alter themselves.⁴ In the second, more historically focused section of the book, Reddy investigates sensibility as the grid in which eighteenth-century people conceived emotions. Yet this is, to my mind, also the more disappointing, for while he promises to explain how emotions affected the French Revolution, his emphasis on cognition in emotion slides into a more conventional discursive history of the language of sensibility.

Patrice Higonnet, in a recent article on trauma in the French Revolution, has attempted to link emotionality and group behavior in historical explanation: he sets out to explain the origins and trajectory of the Terror by thinking about its emotional logic. Rejecting the “discursivists’ magisterial indifference to social fact,” he explores a new kind of social fact, the frenzy of dramatic emotion which gripped France during the early French Revolution, when normal emotional responses were destabilized by the loss of familiar structures of power.⁵ The problem which interests him is how people can become willing to act violently, overriding conventional constraints on their behavior.

Higonnet’s brilliant article is a major contribution to the study of the emotional domain in history, and shows how we might rethink intellectual history if we connected it to emotional experience: so, for instance, he points out that the revolutionaries moved to increasingly abstract thought during the Terror as, like all traumatized victims, they gradually disconnected mind from body. However, his use of the vague term “trauma” to capture the phenomenon he is trying to understand is less helpful,⁶ because it tends to become a catch-all term for very different kinds and levels of emotional disturbance, from witnessing violence, to losing familiar power structures, to revolutionary disappointment. When he argues that “terror emerges directly or indirectly from the intolerably painful and traumatizing, violent collapse of a universalist and universally held world view,” the concept of trauma has to work too hard as he elides violence with the collapse of a worldview. And though Higonnet seeks to avoid “discursivism,” it is not clear how his account of the emotional politics of the French Revolution can be made sufficiently specific and varied to avoid lumping all varieties of revolutionary action as “responses to trauma,” an explanatory move which has the odd affect of replicating the conservative, discursivist, blanket denunciation of revolutionary politics he seeks to escape.

Just how far the linguistic turn has restricted our conceptualization of emotion is evident if we turn to a much older approach to the history of

emotion, that represented in the collection edited by Hans Medick and David Sabeau, *Interest and Emotion* (1984). Medick and Sabeau maintained that we need to consider “material interest” in relation to the history of sentiments; that is, emotions must be related to social structure. This might appear to be a classic neo-Marxist move, but what was novel was their aim of bringing anthropology together with traditional class-based patterns of historical explanation, so that they explored kinship and inheritance as well as social structure — gender fits awkwardly here into the anthropological categories. But which was primary, class or kinship? Seeking to avoid treating emotion as, like ideology, a superstructure built on the base of economic relations, their careful formulation runs that both emotions and material interests are socially constructed and that they arise from what they term “the same matrix”: this leaves it unclear, however, what is meant by the “matrix” which determines all this, and in what it consists. Emotions, they write, “are socially constituted and are not only the expression of experience but also the determinants of experience and practice.”⁷ This reads rather strangely these days, with its New Left freight and its explanatory emphasis on the now suspect category “experience”;⁸ but their synthesis represents a genuine attempt to relate emotions and behavior to material circumstances, treating the emotions as part of social history.

Their endeavor was also explicitly anti-Freudian. In their joint contribution to the volume, Medick and Sabeau argue that “a picture of bourgeois psyche as described by Freud does not fit the emotional dynamics of the family life of the poor,” an idea that Sabeau later developed in his own work, arguing that in the seventeenth century, “conscience” had as yet little to do with feelings or with “a control mechanism along the lines of a ‘superego’ ”: a seventeenth-century development, it was “part of the everyday practice of power,” a legacy of Lutheranism alien to peasant culture.⁹ In their view, Freud’s tripartite model of the mind, with its divisions of ego, superego, and id, simply did not apply to the world before bourgeois sensibility.

For Sabeau and Medick, psychological structure is not universal but historically conditioned; and the key to the affective life of a community is through its kinship and property relations; for Reddy, by contrast, emotions do not change, but how they are expressed can vary at different historical moments. Higonnet also accords material conditions an influence on emotions, but is more interested in how a collective emotion can have real effects. None of the three, however, has a satisfactory account of how emotions work, how they might cause action, or why

they might grip entire societies at particular times. Turning to the witch hunt of western Europe, I will argue, along with Higonnet, that emotions can have historical effects; and, with Medick and Sabeian, that they do relate to material circumstances, old-fashioned as this idea might seem. But I'll argue that we need a theoretical framework through which to relate emotions, language, and reality. The framework I use will in fact be drawn in large part from psychoanalysis, but I shall conclude by suggesting that psychoanalysis itself needs to be historicized.

• • •

IF EVER A SUBJECT were concerned with the emotions, it is witchcraft. The witch, after all, is an embodiment of an emotion: envy. As early as the late fourteenth century, Giotto had represented Envy as an old woman with sagging breasts, clasping a money bag, with asses' ears and a snake coming out of her mouth, burning with the fires of envy. Gradually, Envy joined the canon of the seven deadly sins, and depictions of it became part of the iconographic furniture of late medieval religion. In Hieronymus Bosch's depiction, Envy is a woman wearing a strange, high hat, surrounded by a nightmare retinue of terrifying satanic creatures. Bosch does not equate envy with witchcraft — envy was always more than witchcraft — but the associations are evident.

These associations were strengthened as the medieval theology of the seven deadly sins became enriched by classically influenced depictions of the Vices. In Hendrik Goltzius's powerful — and frequently copied — seventeenth-century image of Envy, we see her as a strong, muscular woman with snakelike hair, a Medusa-like figure ([fig. 4.1](#)). She gnaws at her own heart, thus associating her with cannibalism, also a feature of witchcraft.¹⁰ Variants of this classic image are to be found in many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century representations.¹¹ In Jacques Callot's haunting image, her gaunt shape and hanging, dried-out breasts are mirrored in the dangling teats of the dog, while Satan hovers above ([fig. 4.2](#)).¹²

The origins of the link between Envy and the witch lay in the fusion of classical and religious images, drawn in particular from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a standard text of Latin school education, which also appeared in illustrated editions. The story of Aglauros is set on the feast day of Minerva. Mercury, flying over the earth, was captivated by the beauty of Herse, and determined to have her. His path to her chamber was blocked by her sister Aglauros, and he ordered her to be aunt to

what he bragged would be the fruit of his union with Herse. She demanded money to let him pass; and Minerva, who had her own reasons for bearing a grudge against Herse, determined on revenge. She visited the cave of Envy. This is the moment which illustrations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* frequently select: the splendid goddess Minerva visits the gloomy cave of Invidia, who is shown as a woman with sagging bare breasts and loose, uncovered snake-hair, clutching a viper. She skulks, hunched in her chilly cave, while Minerva stands boldly erect outside with her spear, unable even to bear to look at the foul creature ([fig. 4.3](#)).¹³ Minerva had her way: Aglauros was visited by Invidia, who touched her breast, infecting her with the poison of envy toward her lucky sister. So racked with envy did Aglauros become that she wasted away, and finally sat outside Herse's door, barring access at any price: Mercury simply opened the door with his wand and hardened her to stone.

Like all myths, this story works at many levels, and Ovid's version intensifies its emotional and moral complexity. Like the mortals, Minerva acts out of jealousy and revenge. Aglauros knows a shameful sexual secret of hers, so she wants her to suffer. Minerva envies her because at first, when Mercury promises her gold, it looks as if she will profit from the union of Mercury and Herse. Mercury, the casual seducer, is too cockily confident he will have his way with Herse, and he is evidently taunting her sister. Ovid's set-piece description of Envy is impossible to forget: she is old, sallow, and squinting, and like a witch, she harms her victims secretly, by touching them. She dwells in the dark of her cave. Minerva, the glorious goddess, is drawn to visit her yet cannot bear to look at her, any more than she can acknowledge her own envy.



FIG. 4.1. Jacob Matham, *Envy*, 1593 (after Hendrik Goltzius). (From *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 4:165; by permission of Abaris Books)



FIG. 4.2. Jacques Callot, *Envy*. From the *Seven Capital Sins*, ca. 1620. (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Gift of Dr. Ludwig A. Emge, 1971.17.250)



FIG. 4.3. Virgil Solis, *Minerva at the House of Envy*, illustration to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Frankfurt, 1563). 60 × 82 mm. (From *The Illustrated Bartsch*, 19[1]:323; by permission of Abaris Books)

Such classical treatments of envy soon found their way into vernacular as well as Latin culture because the *Metamorphoses*, alongside other classical texts, was part of Latin school syllabuses, and so began to circulate in non-Latin culture as well. The fusion of Christian moralism with classical mythology is evident in a poem from 1534 by Hans Sachs, “The Twelve Features of Envy,”¹⁴ illustrated by the artist Georg Pencz (fig. 4.4).¹⁵ It shows Envy as a haggard, loose-haired woman, the ultimate perversion of motherhood, whose sagging breasts are full of poison that circles only within her own body, as she consumes herself.

The accompanying poem by Sachs explains how, as he was pondering the reason for discord among men, princes, great lords, and even the common man, he fell asleep and had a vision of an old woman. Her body was “completely naked, wrinkled, barren and yellow,” and she is old because Envy, the daughter of the Devil, worms her way into the heart of man where, if she is not driven out, she increases and “chills the love of one’s neighbor.” She is blind because she cannot bear to look at the prosperity and honor of her neighbors; and she has bat’s wings since she is a creature of the night. One of her feet stamps upon two hands pledging troth, because envy is alien to honor, virtue, and trust, while a snake winds around her other leg. Sachs’s plodding and exhaustive allegory places the figure — connected with night, cold, snakes, poison, and flowing hair — even closer to the figure of the witch, who lacks all

sympathy for Christian souls.¹⁶



FIG. 4.4. Georg Pencz, illustration for Hans Sachs, *Das Feindtselg Laster, der heimlich Neyd* (Nuremberg, 1534). (From *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, 3:965; by permission of Abaris Books)

Indeed, Sachs borrowed much of this description from Ovid. The poem thus domesticated this powerful mythological scene, rich with suggestions about envy between sisters, fertility, and shame, by overlaying it with Christian homilies about sin and vice. In his hands, it becomes a simple moralistic message for his fellow citizens, underlining the importance of the burgher values of amity, the common good, and love of one's fellow man. Gone is the idea that the Gods themselves might suffer envy. Instead, the Witch/Envy figure embodies the danger that threatens the harmony and well-being of the community. She is an

external enemy, not a condition to which we are all subject.

So close were the associations between witchcraft and envy that when the Weimar artist Otto Dix came to represent the seven deadly sins in his 1933 painting of that name, he depicted a comically squat old witch, grasping a walking stick. She is Avarice, and Envy in yellow rides on her back as a dwarf wearing a mask of Hitler. This hag with her scarf, bulbous eyes, and hooked nose looks as if she has stepped straight out of the Grimm Brothers' "Schneewittchen," the story of the old woman who envies youth so much that she poisons beautiful Snow White, but she owes just as much to the images of witches made famous by sixteenth-century artists like Baldung Grien, Dürer, and Cranach, whose work influenced Dix so deeply.

...

IN REPRESENTING Envy as an old witch, sixteenth-and seventeenth-century artists were also drawing on a fundamental contemporary belief about witchcraft, namely that it sprang from envy. Witches' crimes, as demonologists concurred, reflected their envious nature. They brought hail to ruin the crops, they stole the milk from their neighbors' cows — indeed, so common was this association that in Franconia, witches were known as "milk thieves," while in Low German and in the Netherlands the words were interchangeable.¹⁷

Witches were greedy and avaricious. In Basel in 1532, three accused women described how they had sat together under a peach tree in spring, plotting what they planned to consume. One wanted all the cherries that year, another, all the wine, and a third, all the birds of the air.¹⁸ Here they are, or so it would seem, in a woodcut of 1489 from Strasbourg that picks up with suspicious prescience on the same idea of old women enviously stealing and eating all the fruits and delicacies that the springtime promises ([fig. 4.5](#)). This woodcut image, published in many versions to illustrate Ulrich Molitor's *De lamiis*, was well known, and a different version of the same scene was printed in Basel in 1495, a generation before the accused witches made their confessions. Similar confessions would be made by another group of witches in Berlin in the 1550s.¹⁹ At Marchtal, witches were reported to "ride the beasts" at night, driving all the cattle and horses of the area into a frenzied, exhausted herd that left the beasts emaciated and nervous.²⁰ With evil glee, witches in southern Germany would attack the stores of prosperous peasants or respectable burghers, flying into cellars and guzzling wine in silver

tankards from the best barrels, while the Devil looked on.^{[21](#)} Such themes drew on the idea of Schlaraffenland, or the land of Cockaigne, where there is no need to work, where fountains run with wine, and pigs trot about handily sporting the cutlery with which to eat them.^{[22](#)} Peasants, too, often attacked cellars during rebellions, seizing the chance to get drunk on the lord's wine, a topos about social envy which in turn shaped what witches were believed to do.

But it was above all in the harm the witch directed against people that the dynamics of envy are plain. Witches were stereotypically old women, unable to have children any longer, and it was their infertile, hag-like bodies that impelled them enviously to attack the fertility of others. They would creep into the marital bedchamber at night, to press down on pregnant women, leaving them feeling oppressed, or "hag-ridden," as we might say. They would steal a man's virility, like the old woman who "lunged" at the bridal cart and begged the groom for a sausage: sure enough, when evening came, he was not up to the job.^{[23](#)} Worst of all, they would attack new mothers and babies, causing their milk to dry up or their infants to sicken. As the demonologist Lambert Daneau put it, "I have seene them, who with onely laying their handes upon a nurses breastes, haue drawne forth all the milke, and dried them up."^{[24](#)}



FIG. 4.5. Ulrich Molitor, *Three Witches*, hand-colored woodcut. From *De lamiis et phitonicis mulieribus* (Strassburg, ca. 1489). (University of Glasgow Library, Department of Special Collections)

Mothers knew to be on their guard when old women remarked “what a beautiful child” or complimented them on their infants’ rosy cheeks. Like the Evil Eye, such praise betokened envy. Margaretha Menz visited a family with a little child, bringing apples and tidbits for it: the anxious family got the child blessed to protect it from the envious assaults they were sure would follow. When Margaretha showed her displeasure — she knew only too well what this precaution implied — this only convinced the family that they were right, for only a witch would object to blessings.²⁵

The idea that the witch is hell-bent on enviously destroying young women’s fertility goes back at least to the *Malleus*, where Kramer

describes how penitent witches themselves concur that “No one does more harm to the Catholic Faith than midwives. For when they do not kill children, then, as if for some other purpose, they take them out of the room and, raising them up in the air, offer them to devils.” In one of the most chilling passages, he recounts the case of the midwife of the diocese of Basel, who confessed that when she attended births she would stick a needle into the babies “through the crowns of their heads into their brains as they came out from the womb” and in this way she had killed more than forty babies. Kramer follows this up with the story of the midwife who had killed countless infants and was discovered only when a baby’s arm fell out of the linen cloth she wore around her body.²⁶

From the research on trials that has been undertaken over the last twenty years, we know that most convicted witches were not actually midwives. But the imaginative connection between witches, birth, and envy lies close to the surface of many witch trials.²⁷ Frequently, those interrogated described seeing mysterious midwives at the ghoulish feasts where child flesh was consumed, or reported how, in a grisly parody of birth, witches dug up the corpses of dead children from graveyards to cook and eat. This was an idea so strongly connected with women that the Devil was often described as standing by rather than actively participating in the exhumation himself.²⁸

It was not only popular culture which linked witchcraft to gruesome assaults on fertility. The same concern is evident in the classically derived images of Envy, where Envy’s wrinkled body and sagging breasts cast her as a hag who envies young, fertile women. Indeed, the idea that envy is fundamentally about fertility lies at the heart of the myth of Aglauros in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, for it is Herse’s sexual union with Mercury that Aglauros envies. This is not the only reference to fertility. When Aglauros demands money from Mercury, the god of commerce, she is metaphorically asking for seed. Mercury taunts her that she must be aunt to his child: he tries to make her jealous of her sister, who will be the fertile one. Once she is attacked by Envy, her jealousy focuses obsessively on her sister’s union with Mercury, and she tries to prevent it with all her might, blocking the entrance with her body. And at a deeper level too, Minerva herself hates Aglauros because she uncovered Minerva’s sexual secret. She opened the box hiding the child “with no mother,” born when Vulcan assaulted the virgin goddess, and spilled his seed on her leg. Even the gods, Ovid reminds us, can suffer from envy, and envy is at root the desire to prevent generation and creation.

THE REVIVAL OF the classical tradition immeasurably enriched the language of emotions, and its visual dimension. It created an immensely powerful, compressed visual lexicon which would be drawn on in a broad range of media: illustrations, domestic furniture, textiles, as well as print. One of the most widely diffused of these was the emblem book, a new genre which drew on classical texts and models but created something novel. Typically, the emblem consists of three parts: a motto, usually in Latin; an image; and an explanation. Emblems could encapsulate proverbs and quotations; they could represent the Virtues and Vices. Indeed, it was the visual impact of the image of Envy as a witch in emblem books that probably did most to make the equation inescapable (Rubens, for one, had studied with Vaenius, who later went on to produce his own famous books of emblems based on earlier models, and including several showing Invidia in the familiar form of an old hag).²⁹

A runaway publishing success, more than two thousand emblem-book titles appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the most famous were reprinted many times, in all the European languages. The genre was effectively invented by the Italian Andrea Alciato, whose collection of emblems was printed by the canny Heinrich Steyner in Augsburg in 1531 with illustrations by the Augsburg artist Jörg Breu, and a dedication to Conrad Peutinger, the humanist and civic secretary of Augsburg.³⁰ The work rapidly became a best seller and was extended, copied, and pirated so that by 1621, the original had swelled to more than a thousand pages.³¹ Emblem books became part of the material furniture of learning, as students gave them as gifts to companions or favored teachers, Latin masters taught students how to compose emblems, and the educated kept “Stammbücher,” a kind of autograph book in which their friends would pen their own emblems.³² For the classically trained, emblems with their Latin mottos and allegorical figures were a code their education equipped them to interpret; for those whose Latin was a hazy memory, there were vernacular versions. With their rich illustrations and varied typography, emblem books formed the coinage of friendship between the educated.

Emblem books also struck a chord because they offered a means of capturing emotional ambiguity, expressing powerful connections between feelings and behavior, vices and virtues in a single memorable image, something the traditional theology of vice and virtue did not

allow. Soon there were books of emblems devoted to, for instance, love; or to the heart;³³ and some collections even exploited the erotic possibilities of the form to produce a kind of mild pornography.³⁴ As William Huseman has argued, there was often more than a hint of misogyny in emblem books.³⁵

In the 1546 edition of Alciato's collection, Envy appears for the first time, as a naked old woman with flowing hair and sagging breasts, sitting on a rock and eating a viper (fig. 4.6). The text identifies her as "a filthy woman chewing the flesh of vipers, whose eyes give her pain, who gnaws her own heart, in the grip of emaciation and pallor, carrying prickly sticks in her hand," a description once again based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.³⁶ By 1549, she had transmogrified into an erect, bony figure, with snake-hair, carrying a thorny staff; much more like a witch. Her attributes soon became standard, so that in later editions, no matter who the artist, Envy is instantly recognizable by her snaky hair, thorny staff, sagging breasts, and gaunt figure (figs. 4.7, 4.8, 4.9).³⁷

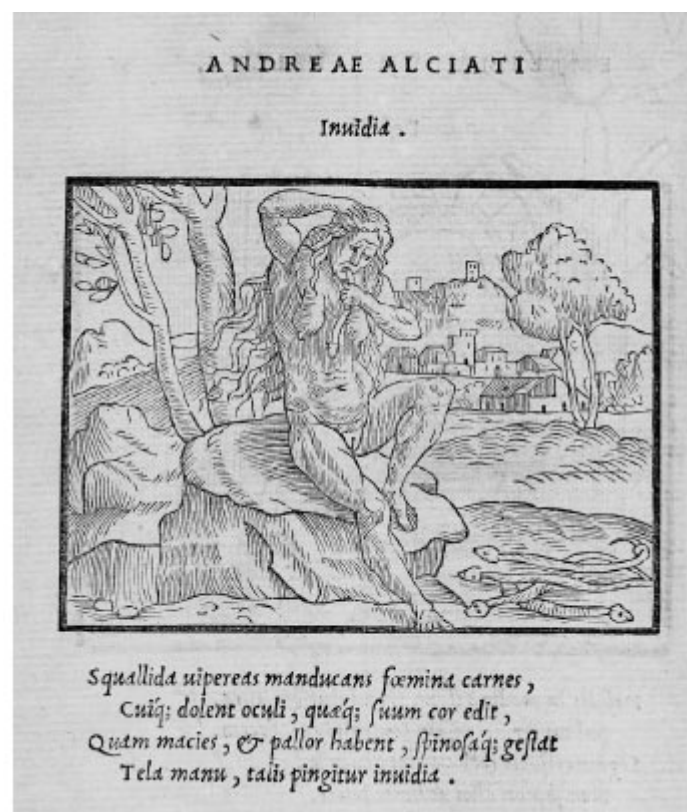


FIG. 4.6. *Envy*. From Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum libellus* (Venice, 1546). (The Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford [Auct. 2 R 6.75, fol. 35v])

The fashionable iconography of the emblem books was not confined to print but soon spilled over into other media. So, for example, the complex decorative scheme of the Nuremberg town hall from 1613

includes emblems and mottos, among which is “Envy as the accompaniment of Virtue,” showing a palm tree with snakes and frogs at its roots. This emblem is taken straight from the emblem books, and the educated viewer would have recognized the political message at once: the common people and evil tongues attack the better sort whose path accords with righteousness. There is also, of course, a reference to witchcraft in the shape of the motifs of frogs and snakes.³⁸ The connections between classically influenced depictions of Envy, Christian ideas about sin, and images of witchcraft are even clearer in an image entitled *Heresia* in Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* of 1618: Heresy has flying hair, a cloud issues from her mouth, she holds snakes in her hands, and she has prominent sagging breasts, while two thorny bushes adorn the background. Here the artist has simply rearranged all the familiar attributes of Envy, so that Heresy is yet another sorceress: witches, who swore allegiance to the Devil, were arch-heretics, and the penalty for heresy was burning.³⁹



FIG. 4.7. *Envy*. From Andrea Alciato, *Emblemes* (Lyon, 1549), 93. (The Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford [Douce A 374, fol. 93r])



FIG. 4.8. *Envy*. From Andrea Alciato, *Emblemata* (Paris, 1584), 163. (By permission of the British Library [87.k.20])



FIG. 4.9. *Invidia*. From Andrea Alciato, *Emblemata* (Padua, 1621), 316. (By permission of the British Library [87.k.20])

Emblems, however, could also suggest the complex interdependency of good and evil. Bartolomeus Anulus's book of emblems pondered why Minerva's spear opens the gates of Envy's cave with her lance, asking whether it did not show that there can be no wisdom without hate-filled jealousy, and that worthy fame opens Envy's path.⁴⁰ Guillaume de La

Perrière speculated that just as, without light, there can be no shadow, so also envy has no power where there is no true fame, a connection which implies that envy guarantees the genuineness of reputation.⁴¹ One fascinating group of emblems show particular insight into envy and its kinship with love. The emblem I discussed in the introduction shows Love as a cupid, whose shadow is Envy, the incongruous shadow of the fearsome old snake-haired witch spookily displacing the child's own; a seventeenth-century version uses the same idea ([fig. 4.10](#)).⁴² Indeed, Love is often depicted in emblem books as an emotion which, like Envy, consumes itself. Envy and Love, far from being the simple opposites of Sachs's jaunty moralism, are shown as closely related, even akin to one another.

• • •

ONE OF THE theologians who contributed to the theology of envy was the Counter-Reformation bishop Peter Binsfeld (1546–1595). Binsfeld became vicar general of the archdiocese of Trier, the scene of a major witch hunt, and was himself a highly influential demonologist whose work on witchcraft was published in German as well as Latin. The son of a peasant, he was part of the generation that grew up in a confessionally divided Christendom, and his background in rural communities probably made him only too alert to the emotional dynamics of envy.⁴³ The opening sections of his treatise on demonology contain a diagnosis of sorcery as springing from hatred against God. Devils, knowing that they are excluded from salvation themselves, hate the good and strive to exclude others from salvation; that is, witchcraft arises from a species of cosmic envy. He goes on to explain that the Devil assesses the character of each person, working out how best to undermine him or her: those who suffer from sadness can be reached through anger or envy.⁴⁴ And, in a long passage which details different individual causes of witchcraft, he describes how women can fall into melancholy, alienation from work, or depression, and then the Devil seizes his chance. Disguising himself, he promises her miraculous help and protection, so that “she desires to revenge herself, whether it be fairly or unfairly, and because she is too weak to do so herself, the Evil one offers her many and various opportunities of revenge.”⁴⁵



FIG. 4.10. *Love and Envy*. From Otto Vaenius, *Amoris divini emblata* (Antwerp, 1615). (The Bodleian Libraries, the University of Oxford [Vet. B2 e.67, fol. 57r])

Binsfeld was a shrewd psychological observer and moral theologian; by contrast, Protestants do not expatiate so much on envy, in part because they were so convinced of the utter pervasiveness of sin in human nature that they had less interest in diagnosing particular sins. Those Protestant moralists who focused on human failings, like the writers of the Devil books, tended to displace *Neid* (envy) with *Hoffart* (pride); and they concentrated on behavior like gambling, drinking, whoring, or marital discord rather than on psychological sins. Though he regularly accused his opponents of envy, Luther himself has little to say about the sin, which he normally twins with hatred, without distinguishing greatly between the two.⁴⁶

Johann Rhode, a Lutheran pastor at Bischleben near Erfurt, is the exception that proves the rule: he produced an extensive treatment of envy in his *Neidhard oder Neidteufel*, published in 1582. More of a systematic compendium of quotations and writings on envy than an inventive creation of an “Envy Devil” along the lines of the genre of the Devil books (popular in the second half of the sixteenth century, which satirized sinful behavior), Rhode’s treatise is comprehensive, but scarcely fun to read. It is larded with quotations from his mentor Luther, few of

which are actually about envy, and his sources are mainly classical, though he also draws on the *Faustbuch* and on several emblem books. Unlike Luther, however, Rhode carefully distinguishes hate from envy. Hate can be public, but envy is always secret, for “Envy is ashamed of its evil will, it will not let itself be discovered or noticed.” All creatures can experience hate, but only humans feel envy.⁴⁷ And yet it is a universal sin, and because of the Fall, “we have sucked in envy with mother’s milk. For behold the tiny children, whom Christ himself sets as an example to us, how rapidly anger, envy and ill humor can be seen in them, yea, even before they eat their first pap.”⁴⁸ Rhode does, however, include anecdotes which are often well observed and psychologically astute, mentioning, for instance, the Erfurt parishioners who envied their pastor his opportunities to study.⁴⁹

But it is as he describes women’s envy that the indirect connections to witchcraft emerge, though Rhode never makes these quite explicit. He informs us, on the authority of Euripides, no less, that envy is very common among women, following this up with the story of a woman who was compelled to fetch a woman she hated to act as her midwife. When the pains were at their worst, the midwife exclaimed, “Now you are in my power!” Only when the woman in labor begged her to help “for God’s sake” did she assist “and not let envy be seen.” This is a covert reference to witchcraft for the standard magical remedy against a harmful spell was to beg the suspected witch three times to take back the spell “for God’s sake.” (It also, of course, put the suspected witch in an impossible position, for if she refused to help, that proved her hostility, but if she did help, this only confirmed that she had indeed cast the spell.)⁵⁰

Rhode continues, in a section headed “Female Craziness,” “Women often complain and say, ‘Ach God have mercy, an old witchy whore has cast a spell on my child or my animal with her face or her evil gob,’ ” condemning the practice of hanging corals around infants’ necks to protect them from the Evil Eye.⁵¹ Even for an orthodox Lutheran, apparently skeptical about such female superstition, envy was inseparable from witchcraft. The title page of the tract features not a jolly Envy Devil but a naked old woman with flying hair, holding a thorny staff and gnawing a viper, while a female Devil stabs her open heart. Witch and Envy are indistinguishable ([fig. 4.11](#)).

However, a remarkable pamphlet appended to tracts by Johann Arndt and Johann Rist, and published in 1690, provides an astute and startlingly different approach to envy. Entitled *Consideration of the*

Question of Whether Envy Hinders or Advances Virtue, the pamphlet by Georg Paul Harsdörffer starts off with the diatribe against envy one might expect.⁵² But in the final pages of the pamphlet, he suddenly turns the tables, and points out that envy can never in fact destroy virtue: “As much as mist can do against the rays of the sunlight, so little can envy accomplish against virtue.” The pamphlet, which seems to come from a Pietist milieu, is prefaced with a diagram of envy which illustrates this aphorism: above, the rays of the sun dispel the gloomy cloud of envy, while below, the enviers burn in the fires of Hell ([fig. 4.12](#)). Harsdörffer points out that envious persons only harm themselves, while “those who use their gifts with modesty and humility ... generally avoid being envied”; envy thus has a positive function as a moral warning, for just as God sends us sympathetic hearts when we are in misery so that we do not despair, so also He sends us enviers when we are happy, so that we should not overreach ourselves. This builds on some of the complex psychological understanding of the emblem books, but it proposes a very different conception of envy. Harsdörffer presents envy not as a diabolically inspired sin which will bring death and destruction in its wake, but as a state of mind to be pitied.



FIG. 4.11. Title page of Johann Rhode, *Neidhard oder Neidteufel* (Erfurt, 1582). (By permission of the British Library [8410.c.22])



FIG. 4.12. Georg Paul Harsdörffer, *Herrn Georg Paul Harsdörffers Erörterung der Frage: Ob der Neid die Tugend hindere oder befördere* (1690). The pamphlet is prefaced with a diagram of envy which illustrates the answer to this question: above, the rays of the sun dispel the gloomy cloud of envy, while below, the enviers burn in the fires of Hell. (By permission of the British Library [3910.de.5])

...

WHY SHOULD there have been such a cultural obsession with envy in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and such fear of its destructive power? One might adduce increasing class divisions, tensions over access to limited resources as a result of the bad climate and poor harvests of the Little Ice Age, all of which have also been related to the witch hunt. We know that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the process of elite formation was beginning, as small groups of six or seven

leading families began to crystallize in myriads of tiny villages.⁵³ Those who had wealth and status might thus expect to be envied, and so to have become particularly anxious about envy. Class tensions certainly have a role to play in the dynamics of witchcraft persecution, though recent studies have shown that the witch was not generally an outsider, but someone with close ties to the community, involved in its systems of exchange. Those who were accused of witchcraft were in the main, we now know, of only slightly lower social status than those who accused them. They were often old women who were dependent, who relied on casual earnings here and there, and who had to cultivate relationships with others to survive. An explanation of this kind would relate the history of emotion to material relationships, perhaps to kinship, in the way that Medick and Sabeian proposed.

But though this may be part of the constellation of forces at work here, I don't think that it is primary. Though Sabeian and Medick are right to try to relate the history of emotion to social configurations and thus to social history, we need a broader understanding of the kinds of connection that can be made. Keith Thomas, Alan Macfarlane, and others writing in the first wave of postwar research on witchcraft occasionally seemed to reduce the irrational world of witchcraft to factors that we thought we understood better, like economics.⁵⁴ The recent emphasis on "neighborhood conflicts" as the motor of witchcraft allegations also reduces the baroque world of Satanic witchcraft to something more mundane and seemingly comprehensible, but fails to explain why age-old phenomena like neighborhood conflicts should suddenly have generated such murderous emotions or have taken such a fantastical supernatural turn. When Medick and Sabeian moved beyond class to consider kinship as part of the world of material interest, they were trying to escape the doctrine that everything was determined by class, but the scope of what they thought might affect the emotions was still too narrow. The terrifying fantasies about witches that haunted witnesses and accused witches alike must be part of the story, alongside the powerful emotions which they expressed in their testimonies, often in a highly articulate fashion. Here we return again to the connections between physiology and emotions, for witchcraft is fundamentally about physical harm caused by emotions. Indeed, as David Meili argued long ago in his study of witchcraft in Swiss villages, wishing evil may well actually have caused harm, for emotional conflicts can make people ill.⁵⁵

Among these emotional conflicts, particularly important are the tensions between older, infertile women and younger women. Very often,

allegations of witchcraft would surface during the period of lying-in, when a woman had given birth. Time and again, allegations of this kind were made during witch trials. Because young mothers were held in such high regard, feted with lying-in feasts and gifts,⁵⁶ their well-being and nutrition respected, they expected to be the target of envy, and so they anticipated attacks by witches. In a society where marriage was a privilege, and where those without means or relegated forever to servant status might never be able to aspire to matrimony, young fertile married women were indeed enviable.⁵⁷

...

THE PSYCHOANALYST Melanie Klein is perhaps the greatest modern theorist of envy. She regards it as closely related to the death instinct, a destructive emotion which spoils what is good. Envy, as she puts it, “is the angry feeling that another person possesses and enjoys something desirable — the envious impulse being to take it away or to spoil it.”⁵⁸ It is a primary emotion, originating in the very early months of the infant’s life. In one of the arguments which is perhaps hardest for laypeople to swallow, Klein claims that we envy the mother herself, in the form of the breast. Where Freud had talked of penis envy on the part of women, dating from the genital phase around the age of three, Klein relates the emotion of envy much further back, to the very beginnings of the infant’s emotional development and its relationship with the mother, at the core of the personality. The infant, unable to tolerate the absent breast, and projecting its rage and frustration onto it, also envies the wonderful good breast, and wants angrily to destroy it.⁵⁹

Witches were thought to be envious destroyers of everything good, withering fertility in the natural and the human world because of their bitter envy. But these, of course, were the beliefs *about* witches, not the real emotional dynamics of the trials themselves. In the mirror world of witch accusations, the emotional constellations were actually the other way around. What happened was not that the old woman felt envious, and then destroyed her neighbors’ cattle and crops or made their children die: rather, her neighbors feared envious attacks, identified the witch as the cause of misfortune, and then drove that person to her death. Murderous aggression originated not in the witch herself, but in those who accused her. It was not envy but identification of *someone else* as envious which provided the emotional fuel of the witch craze.

Klein’s ideas about envy may also help us to understand the

psychology of the accusers in witchcraft trials, whose fantasies about witchcraft, after all, were key to the dynamics of persecution. Klein suggests that there is an infinite variety of defenses against envy, a feeling against which there is powerful resistance because of envy's destructive nature.⁶⁰ One of these defenses is to stir up envy in others, by achieving success or material wealth — and, one might add, fecundity. But such achievements always leave individuals insecure because, having projected their own envy onto other people, they fear their envious attacks all the more keenly. This makes them unable to enjoy what they have, thus increasing their sense of envy yet further. Or, Klein says, they might defend against their envy by “devaluing their object,” that is, by denigrating the mother. That is to say, the explanation for the witch hunt would lie not in the envy the witch felt, but in the disowned envy of her accusers. The strong misogyny evident in the witch craze certainly seems relevant here.

Another form of defense against envy, Klein argues, is to stifle feelings of love, a maneuver which leads to increasing feelings of hate that often convert into a form of apparent emotional indifference.⁶¹ This, too, seems apparent in many of the relations between neighbors during periods of witch-hunting, where there appears to be a remarkable degree of indifference toward the sufferings of accused women who had once been valued members of the community, relied upon for help in child care, or renowned for their skill in cooking and baking. Klein's insights might help us to understand the role of envy in witch-hunting as arising out of the initial disturbed relationship to the breast which then gets projected onto someone else, rather than in the envy of the woman accused of being a witch. Because the conflicts over envy are so deep and are buried in the unconscious, the results can often be violent, and the individuals involved are not aware of why they feel such murderous urges.

Envy is also intimately related to the oral phase and the bond with the mother, and this might explain why so much of witchcraft features oral fantasies. Witches frequently harm their victims by offering them cakes, beer, and milk; they strew poison in the infant's pap or cause their mother's milk to dry up. Just as Envy is a hag who gnaws away at her heart, consuming what should be the fount of love and happiness, so witchcraft is ultimately about attacking sustenance and creation.

Conflicts at this deep level around envy are also, in Klein's view, connected with the inability to integrate good and evil. While splitting processes are at first essential in order to protect the good against

destructive envy, over time the split-off parts of the self must gradually be reintegrated if psychological wholeness is to be achieved; failure to reintegrate them, on the other hand, leaves the individual yet more dangerously exposed to envy. This, too, is a helpful insight into the psychology of witch hunters. Many of them evinced a powerful tendency to exalt and denigrate Mary: the demonologist Martin Del Rio, for example, wrote powerfully on the subject of witches but was also a passionate devotee of Mary, composing “Flowers for the Virgin Mary” and collections of sermons in her honor.⁶² Witch hunters, both Catholic and Protestant, shared an overweening sense of God’s judgmental power (what Klein might term a persecutory superego) and an inability to see the world in any way other than as a struggle between binary moral absolutes. Along with many other late-sixteenth-century thinkers, they had an abiding suspicion of pleasure. Works of demonology nearly always include diatribes against dancing at the sabbath, which are closely related to the moralistic literature castigating those who give themselves over to the luxurious sin of dancing, while they are clearly as fascinated by the idea of sex with the Devil as they are anxious to condemn it. This would chime with Klein’s insight that those who suffer from envy can lose the capacity for enjoyment.

However, there is something in the neatness of fit between Klein’s ideas and the dynamics of witch-hunting that gives me pause. Klein rarely makes wide cultural references in her work, sticking instead to clear articulation of her theories based on carefully described clinical observation. She is unlike Freud, whose writings are littered with casual classical and literary allusions, part of his strategy to establish the cultural authority of psychoanalysis. But in her 1957 paper “Envy and Gratitude,” Klein chooses to quote from Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser when she wants to convey the essence of envy.⁶³ These are all authors from the epoch of the witch hunt.

Why should this be? Klein shares with sixteenth-and seventeenth-century authors a deep horror of envy. She believes that envy really can do harm, because of its capacity to destroy life and good objects. She places envy as a key source of illness, and this comes very close to the early modern idea that it is a root cause of sin. For Klein, envy is closely linked with the death instinct; for demonologists, with the Devil, and thus with the realm of death as well.

But there is something frankly disturbing about Klein’s anatomization of envy, for she accords it genuine destructive power. Whereas analysts usually stress that the patient’s belief that his or her aggression can harm

the analyst is a fantasy, envy's capacity to destroy is (in Klein's view) no fiction. And there is something disproportionate in Klein's view of the destructive force of envy in psychological life: writing about one woman patient who suffered from envy, the "object" which is destroyed by this powerful force is the interpretation Klein offers her.⁶⁴ The emphasis Klein places on envy as lying at the root of many psychological disturbances, and the way she links it with notions of morality, means that she comes close to demonizing envy. By contrast, our own era is far less publicly worried by envy, in part because we are less troubled about the ethics of capitalism and see envy of material wealth as possibly even helpful for the market. But if public discourse is less preoccupied with envy, that does not, of course, mean that we are no longer plagued by the green-eyed monster.

The history of emotion itself may have something to contribute here. The basic palette of human emotions is probably pretty constant, and that may well be because it has, as Reddy suggests, a physiological component. In particular historical periods, however, some emotions might be prevalent in society as a whole: envy, for example, in Germany in the early modern period or in Weimar; grief in the years of the First World War; envy, perhaps, in the postwar Britain of the late 1950s, suddenly coming to terms with increased prosperity and a highly complex cult of motherhood; or the tangle of emotions that Higonnet refers to as "trauma" during the French Revolution. Understanding the psychology of envy can help us to understand the dynamics of the witch hunt, because emotions can cause social action. But then we need to ask why particular emotions are powerful in certain historical periods. That is a question I can't begin to answer, but I think it will help us to ask.

Chapter Five

WITCHCRAFT AND VILLAGE DRAMA

IN 1747, MORE THAN a hundred years after the witch craze had ended, Magdalena Bollman found herself accused of witchcraft. Bollman came from the village of Alleshausen in what is now part of Württemberg, high on the plateau by the Federsee, a flat, brooding landscape dotted with pilgrimage churches and ruled by the Premonstratensian monks of the Abbey of Obermarchtal. Bollman was not the first to be accused of witchcraft in this particular outbreak of witchcraft trials. By the time the accusations against her were heard, four women had already been burned as witches, and three more would meet their deaths before the episode was over, seven women in a population of barely five hundred people.¹ It was extraordinary for such a large outbreak of witch-hunting to occur so late: this was the period of the first stirrings of the Enlightenment. Even the executions did not put an end to it. Just nine years later, three more women in the neighboring village of Brasenbergl were tried for witchcraft, escaping burning only because the village mayor and the advisory jurist declared the evidence inadmissible and so brought the trials to a halt.²

At about the same time as these horrific trials, a young monk from the monastery of Obermarchtal was enjoying his early literary successes. Sebastian Sailer (1714–1771) is hardly a name to conjure with outside Swabia. But Sailer played a not insignificant role in the development of German literature that reached its apogee in the late eighteenth century: he knew the Enlightenment poet and translator of Shakespeare Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), who hailed from nearby Biberach and who lived there between 1760 and 1765; and his literary works were read by the likes of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Sailer was the first Swabian dialect poet, producing comic dramas based on village life alongside

wonderfully idiosyncratic religious plays where Eve makes the specialty of the Swabian kitchen, *Spätzle*, while God watches the weather like a shrewd Swabian peasant. At first, his dialect dramas circulated only in performance, while the devotional works which he also composed — and for which he was well known during his lifetime — were printed. But the texts of the plays were soon copied in manuscript form and passed from hand to hand; and from at least the late eighteenth century, his plays began to be printed, not only by local presses in tiny townlets like Riedlingen, but by major printers. In 1783, a version of one of his plays was published — suitably rendered into the local dialect — in Vienna.³

Sailer's work was part of the early Enlightenment discovery and creation of folk culture that was to find its full flowering in the nineteenth century, as academics created dialect dictionaries, scoured peasant households for fairy tales, and documented the marriage customs and costumes of the local peasantry. In his poems and dramas, Sailer immortalized the world of the peasants in rural Swabia, mocking their pretensions and narrow-mindedness with affectionate humor. Like so many local scholars at this time, working far from metropolitan centers but influenced by the new intellectual currents, Sailer was fascinated by language and determined to preserve local culture. We also know that he had an early posting as an assistant priest in the village of Seekirch, Alleshausen's parish church, at just the time these trials were beginning. How did these two very different mid-eighteenth-century worlds connect — Sailer's satirical version of coarse but cozy village life, animated by Enlightened curiosity, and the relentless cruelty that characterizes the trials?⁴

The case against Magdalena Bollman began with apparently trivial incidents. Conrad Citterell was leading his little two-year-old by the hand as they walked by her house, and Bollman, hearing the toddler pass, leaned out her window to give him a bit of warm rissole to eat. His father, however, told the child to keep it in his fist, and when they reached Bartle Brugger's house, he gave it to the cat, who promptly vomited it up. A few days later, the little boy went to Bollman's house for an hour or so, and that evening, he was taken ill. He vomited strange white material, was distant and alienated from his parents, as they noted, and he threw his food about wildly. Finally he fell into a sweat and lay quietly in his father's arms. Conrad Citterell's son never recovered and eventually died in agony.⁵ Several village women also appeared to testify, alleging that Bollman had attended their births, or had visited them during the period of lying-in. Then their babies had died, or they

themselves had suffered terrible illnesses and pain. But it was not just the community of matrons whose support Bollman had apparently lost: her own husband repeatedly nagged the mayor, demanding that his wife be taken for trial, because it was “impossible” for him to continue living with her in the current atmosphere of suspicion.⁶

The village mayor duly assembled the accounts of six witnesses and sent the case to the central court at Obermarchtal, barely a half day’s journey away in this tiny territory. There, Bollman was interrogated and imprisoned. The interrogations went on for more than six months without any confession from Bollmann, and the authorities’ patience snapped. They began to bully her in questioning, saying that if she refused to confess that she was a witch, she was accusing those women who testified against her of perjury and dishonor. Then they moved to torture, applying thumbscrews not only to her thumbs but to her toes, and they had her bound to the bench and whipped for a quarter of an hour. In following sessions, they resorted regularly to whipping on the bench, one of the more severe forms of torture. When she collapsed onto the floor, the executioners redoubled their efforts, whipping her as she lay there on her arms and back. By this point, Bollman began to fall unconscious during interrogation, and so, to wake her, the interrogators ordered that the soles of her feet should be burned with blessed candles and that candles should be put under her nose. The next day, when she again fell insensible, they attempted to rouse her by whipping the black and blistered soles of her feet, but to no avail. Three times during her trial Bollman was made to suffer the indignity of being strip-searched by the executioners, who secretly “pricked” her witches’ marks and investigated her privy parts. Finally, Bollman was dragged unconscious on a rope down the stairs to her cell, where she was found dead a few hours later. In its meticulous recording of all the torture and its duration, there are few documents from the European witch hunt to match this case for sheer brutality.⁷

Magdalena Bollman came from the same village in which Sebastian Sailer began his career as a priest, and this was the region which was to inspire his creative work as a writer for the next thirty years. Following the model of Counter-Reformation best practice, the Obermarchtal monastery sent its own brothers to act as parish clergy for the villages it ruled, where they came to know their parishioners intimately, keeping the written registers of births, marriages, and deaths and writing chronicles of village life. The monks themselves were mostly locals from near Marchtal or from wider Swabia, the sons of peasants or small-town

burghers, and they had learned High German and Latin as well as the dialect with which they grew up. The monastery library was poor, but the monks' horizons extended to the other monastic foundations dotted about the lake, and to the Order. It was in one of these neighboring monasteries, the Premonstratensian house at Schussenried, that Sailer first performed his comedy *The Creation*, playing all the parts and accompanying himself on the violin.⁸ The monks heard, through Sailer's brilliantly meticulous literate transcription, the rough, broad vowels and coarse speech their education had been designed to make them unlearn, sharing the joke with others who understood only too well the vexations of ministering to Swabian bumpkins.⁹

Sailer first wrote the religious plays in the Swabian idiom for which he is famous, and then, during the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s, he produced a series of village plays in which he caricatured all the stock figures of the rural landscape. There is the hamlet mayor, rolling drunk in the village inn, the minor local official who is paralyzed with fear at the sight of a hare, the tavern keeper who is only too candid about how he and the mayor are in cahoots, and the district official who speaks High German and has only contempt for the peasants. All have their parallels in the trials. Catharina Schmid, executed for witchcraft in 1747, was firmly convinced that she was the victim of a plot hatched between the publican and the mayor in their drinking bouts together. The anxieties of a man like Josef Cadus, the barely literate village mayor, evident in his crabbed handwriting as he tries to compile a dossier of witness statements that will impress the legal authorities in Obermarchtal, find their fictional counterpart in the worries the mayor expresses in *Die sieben Schwaben* (The Seven Swabians) about whether he is up to the job. Sailer's mayor is not too hot on bureaucratic exactitude, and neither was the real-life mayor of Alleshausen: when Mayor Cadus put his list of witnesses together, he forgot to correct it, and one of the women he proudly lists never appeared in the case and had to be replaced by a fifteen-year-old youth, too young even to give sworn evidence.

Sailer was also well aware of the growing class nature of village society, and reflects this in his plays. As we have seen, from the late sixteenth century on, throughout southern Germany, village society had been becoming increasingly divided between small groups in each village of six or seven families who owned substantially more land than their fellows and who monopolized political offices. These families pursued calculated marriage and inheritance strategies, consolidating land and family power, and by the eighteenth century, their grip on village politics

was secure, often deliberately supported by landlords and rulers who assigned leases accordingly.¹⁰ In Alleshhausen, the monastery was the main landlord as well as the political authority, and by the eighteenth century, it had named each farm after a saint, creating a religious topography of status — every peasant would have known what “St. Sigismund” or “St. Sales” was worth. Inequalities of wealth were clearly part of the background to the witch hunts: the same families of Cadus and Engler held the large farms and recur in the lists of mayors and jurors; while those accused of witchcraft did not come from their group. As in witch hunts all over Europe, those accused of witchcraft tended to be slightly poorer, on the whole, than those who accused them, but the social distance was not great. The Bollmans were apparently a new family, but they had intermarried with the well-established Stroms; Magdalena’s first husband had belonged to the large Weyler clan. Those who went to court against Magdalena were her neighbors and her rough social equals.¹¹ The same village hierarchies are reproduced in Sailer’s plays: we soon get to know that Veit Balger is the village bounder, or that the tavern keeper thinks he is a cut above the others, or that Lizelnuss is going to vote for his brother-in-law.¹² Everyone knew what everyone else was worth — after all, the monastery knew the value of each of its farms, and the peasants knew just how much tax everyone should pay. But, though church and layfolk worked the same system of social ranking, Sailer’s own ambivalence about it is clear in the character of Florian Simpel, the upright and modest farmer who is his ideal mayor, though he is poorer than his neighbors.

Yet for all his mockery, Sailer’s picture of village life is good-humored. His target is the small compass of the peasants’ world: in *Sonn- und Mondfang*, the villagers think they can catch the sun and the moon, which they are convinced rise and set behind their own local hill, the Aisterberg. If, as the educated student character tells them, the earth moves, then why hasn’t their village passed through France and Spain yet? He laughs, too, at village politics: in the mayoral election at Limmelsdorf, the town mayor is voting for the publican, his drinking pal, because “they get on with each other” and that’s the key, even though, as he says, they haven’t the least idea how you run a village; while in *Die sieben Schwaben*, the drunken sot of a mayor tries to teach his simpleton beadle how to treat him with respect, French-style, by raising his hat. The mayor’s idea of bold leadership is to launch a crusade against the hare that he is sure is terrorizing the village, but he flees in terror once he sees the animal itself, with its pointy ears, twitching nose, and rolling

eyes. Just occasionally, Sailer authorializes. He intervenes in the character of the student in *Sonn-und Mondfang*, son of the village official, to praise reason (*Vernunft*) and to advocate doing what educated men tell them.¹³ Or in *Schultheißenwahl zu Limmelsdorf* (The Village Election) the message is the same: Florian Simpel refuses to cast a vote for mayor because he's happy to leave it all to the authorities, who will be the best judges of who should do the job.¹⁴ Both the student and the district official speak High German, unlike all the other characters except the priest. But Sailer is too good a writer not to undercut his own moral: it is the anarchic energy of characters like Veit Balg in the elections at Limmelsdorf, pig-headedly refusing to vote as they should, that actually gives the plays interest and drama.¹⁵

Just how ambivalent Sailer's attitude to village life was can be seen in his treatment of religion, which, perhaps strangely for a long-standing cleric and preacher, does not escape his satirical eye. When the mayor is trying to persuade the *Bannwarth* to undertake the dangerous job of spying on the sun and the moon, he reassures him that since he always bows to every single saint every matins (that is, failing to grasp the point of the calendar, which is to honor individual saints on their own days), they're surely guaranteed to protect him now. And *Die sieben Schwaben* ends with a mock religious procession, where Blitzschwab is so stupid he doesn't even realize he has landed the plum job of carrying the banner, while the chorus sings, "They tell us all about eternal life, but even more about how we should pay taxes."¹⁶ Sailer also criticizes the priest in Limmelsdorf for spending too much time in the inn.

Yet Sailer's rustic paradise, where God is in his Swabian heaven, is a very partial vision. For a start, there are no women in the village plays. In part this is for reasons of propriety. Female absence, however, has a deeper logic. Women do not form part of Sailer's view of village politics because they do not vote, cannot stand for office, and cannot write down their opinions as their menfolk do. But it is apparent from the witchcraft trials that women were very actively involved in the village court, bringing cases and bearing witness against those whom they suspected. Time and again, women's statements described what had happened in the birthing chamber or in the lying-in room among the womenfolk: Magdalena Bollman had held one woman's legs and supported her back as she labored in the birthing chair, and afterward the new mother had felt terrible pains in those places, never recovering; or she had allegedly cradled a newborn infant in her arms, and soon it had died. The role of women, and their emotional anchoring of these communities, is utterly

erased from Sailer's plays along with their murderous enmities. Women feature only offstage, as foolish females hankering after the prize seat at feasts and processions that comes with being the mayor's wife.

Indeed, Magdalena Bollman was as pious and obedient a Swabian peasant as Sailer could have wished. Putting her trust in the impartiality of the authorities, she demanded to be investigated for signs of witchcraft by the district official, the *Oberamtmann*, and attempted to confide in him alone. When that failed, she asked to be tested by the Capuchin clergy. Throughout her trial, she called steadfastly on Jesus, Mary, and the saints to witness her innocence. This was a woman who traveled to Biberach for special devotions, who went on pilgrimage, and was trusted to sew up the shrouds of the dead. It was second nature to her to appeal to the authorities for protection for it was to the mayor she had turned seven years before when she was first branded a witch, and she had then received a formal apology from the woman who had insulted her. The case which ended in her death began when she and her husband brought Conrad Citterell and his wife to court for calling her a witch.¹⁷ This time, her trust in the law was misplaced.

There is a pattern in the accusations. Most of those women who bore witness against Bollman were younger than she, still fertile in their twenties or thirties, whereas Bollman was at the end of her childbearing years. The key accusations against Bollman involved her behavior during other women's labor or her giving food to children, and this was connected: Bollman seemed to be intervening in the fundamental functions of motherhood to do things better than other mothers. In the murky series of possession and obsession cases which surrounded the witch trials, no men appear to have fallen prey to the Devil: women appear to have been more susceptible to dramatizing their sufferings and emotions through physical paroxysms.¹⁸ And the interrogators seem to be simply reenacting the dramas of female village life when they confronted Magdalena Bollman with the implications of her refusal to confess: if she did not admit she was a witch, then she was branding the other women liars, perjurers, and women of no repute. In the female world of gossip, reputation was all; to fail to fight an insult to one's honor was to lose one's good name, and a witch was a woman who was "no use," as Bollman herself repeatedly put it. Once one became "useless," one was excluded entirely from the society of upright, honorable women. This is what effectively happened to Magdalena Bollman.

There is a grisly pattern, too, in the fact that mothers and daughters

were frequently targeted in these cases. Catharina Schmid and her daughter were both executed, as were Maria Bingasser and her daughter Anna; and during the trial of Magdalena Bollman, the interrogators intervened to warn Jakob Bollman that he ought to keep an eye on his stepdaughter Barbara, because it was likely that she was a witch as well.¹⁹ This was virtually inviting the villagers to bring yet another case of witchcraft. And yet the interrogators were only picking up here on a remark which Conrad Citterell had made in his first statement, when he deliberately mentioned that it was Magdalena's daughter Barbara who had returned his child from her house, implying that the two women were scheming together to kill his little son. Something in the intensity of the relationship between mothers and daughters, the perceived complicity between them, seems to have excited the anxiety and aggression of their communities, and to have roused the hostility of women as much as it did of men.

This dynamic found its most poignant expression when Maria Bingasser denounced her own daughter as a witch in response to pressure from the interrogators. She told them she had corrupted her daughter, taking her to witches' sabbaths. But Maria loved her child, and if she were there, Maria would say to her face: "Annele! We have always loved each other, now let us go together to Eternity as well, and make sure we go to Heaven." The interrogators promptly confronted Bingasser with her daughter, who was also in prison, and when Anna stoutly denied she was a witch, the two women now concurred the whole thing had been a diabolic delusion, and were so adamant in their denials that the interrogators had to release them. Shortly after, when Anna began saying in public that she was a witch, they were both imprisoned again and the authorities at last got what they wanted: Anna confessed her mother had seduced her into witchcraft. She said she never wanted to see her mother again, and "that she was her enemy, because she had brought her into such a miserable state." In this case, the interrogators' obsession with the intense relationship between the two women formed the emotional core of the case, and it ended only when they had made the daughter forswear their bond.²⁰

Sailer can give us no notion of the constraints within which a woman like Magdalena Bollman had to survive in Alleshausen, dependent on the web of relations with other, younger men and women, and on her second husband's kin. Bollman had given birth to twelve children, only five of whom were still living by the time of her trial, when she herself was aged, as she said, "42 or 43." She knew all about labor and about

bringing up children, so it is small wonder that she was summoned to attend when women felt the first birth pangs. It is often argued that women accused of witchcraft were marginals, outsiders to the village, but in this case, the witnesses against Bollman all had close ties to her. After she had supposedly attempted to poison Conrad Citterell's son, the toddler spent an hour alone with her in her house; when, the previous autumn, she had supposedly caused the whole family terrible illness by giving them some of the *Saath hanen* (seed cock) she had baked, Citterell's pregnant wife was still happy to visit Bollman in her house and delouse her; and on the Easter Saturday shortly before the accusation was made, she, her husband, and Bollman had gone to Seekirch together to get bled and had stopped at a pub where the two women had shared a beer, drinking from the same glass.²¹ Anna Maria Müntz might have been convinced that Bollman had caused the abdominal pains from which she had suffered since giving birth, but this did not stop her begging Bollman for apples from her garden.²² When Bollman's sister-in-law added her voice to those telling stories about her behavior in the birthing chamber, Bollman forfeited her husband's support. In a small village like Alleshausen, where most of the inhabitants shared the same half-dozen surnames, kinship did not always unite. The intersection of neighborhood bonds with kinship meant reliance on others. It also permitted physical intimacy, but the closeness of touch in sharing drink, holding during the pain of childbirth, or delousing appears to have been deeply ambivalent. Witnesses traced back the calamities they suffered to that moment of physical closeness, and retrospectively interpreted Bollman's intentions as malicious.²³

When Sailer got rid of women from his village plays, he also got rid of witchcraft. The all-male monastic environment which was his intellectual retreat whenever he tired of peasant society allowed him to escape women in real life as well. But witchcraft only appeared to be women's business because the rigid sexual codes of eighteenth-century society identified women with emotionality and physicality: the men who testified on their wives' behalf, who passed on rumors, and who tried out witch-finding techniques were just as implicated in witch-hunting as women were. Eighteenth-century rural society offered women scant possibilities for independence, excluding them from political and economic power. Life was hard for women who lacked menfolk to protect them, and there were few options for older women outside the village, either: none of those accused of witchcraft tried to flee. Gender divisions were hardening in lay culture, too, and by the eighteenth

century in Marchtal, only women were ever accused of witchcraft. This was new, for even at the height of the witch craze, the identification of the witch with women had never been complete, and men, too, had been executed for witchcraft in significant numbers. But when Marchtal's rulers ordered that Bollman's corpse should be publicly burned under the gallows, they explicitly did so "as a shocking example to the female sex."

It is striking how many of the allegations apparently dated back many years. The insult that Bollman was a witch had been leveled seven years before by Anna Maria Münt, but it is far from clear that others shared her suspicions at the time: Bollman certainly thought she had shrugged it off, and though she may have been naive to think the slur could be so easily disposed of, there is no indication that anyone avoided her or feared her touch. Rather, once Citterell made his allegation, the suspicions of others seem to have crystallized as they went back through what might have caused their own past tragedies. This was probably not a matter of chance: we know that the village mayor, Josef Cadus, had to put his file of accusations together for the authorities in Obermarchtal, and it is likely that he actively solicited testimony. Bollman insisted that Citterell's wife had blamed Catharina Schmid, the executed witch, for her child's death; for whatever reason, her suspicions had now shifted to Bollman. All these allegations were being formulated when four women from the village had already been burned at the stake, and when terror and guilt seem to have plunged the community into a fevered state, convincing everyone that witches were harming those they loved. When Bollman expressed her astonishment that people she knew well could think she was a witch, or that ailments everyone had attributed to natural causes could now be ascribed to her evil spells, she was probably not protesting mock ignorance as the authorities believed.²⁴ The accusations were most likely formulated only in the atmosphere of witch-hunting, during the heightened sense of the struggle between good and evil which it fostered.

This atmosphere was closely connected with the kind of religiosity the village was experiencing. Its drama could not be more distant from the kind of folksy piety that breathes through Sailer's plays. Sailer's is a picture of rough but heartfelt devotion from peasants whose emotional responses to religion are warmly sincere even if their ignorance of the Bible is shocking. It seems at one with the glorious baroque pilgrimage churches that were being built all over the region in this period, at nearby Steinhausen and Obermarchtal itself, with their fleshy putti and imitation marble and gilt.²⁵ By contrast, the religiosity that emerges in

the witchcraft cases is all centered on possession and exorcism. The first witchcraft case involving Catharina Schmid revolved around a possessed girl who had blamed first Schmid and then her daughter for causing her convulsions; while one of the witnesses against Bollman was obsessed by a demon who made it impossible for her even to deliver her statement to the officials. When Anna Maria Münst came to testify against Bollman, there was high drama, for the very mention of Bollman's name caused both Münst and the obsessed woman to suffer terrible pains. Despite her physical agony, Münst was willing to undergo the ordeal of confronting Bollman in person and repeating her testimony to Bollman's face (the so-called "confrontation" of witch and witness that often resulted in confession). When she had finished, she was nearly overwhelmed with the pain, as the protocols of the case note. All this would have been powerful proof to the authorities in the interrogation chamber of the viciousness of the accused witch who confronted them.²⁶

Behind these dramas of possession lay the shadowy presence of the Capuchin friars. Conrad Citterell's little son had been taken to the Capuchins at Biberach for blessing when he fell ill. Magdalena Bollman herself had been to visit the Capuchin house in Biberach, too, and when Anna Maria Münst fell ill, she had resorted to blessings from the Capuchins, who had told her that her illness was most likely caused by "evil people." Peter Strobel had been given a piece of paper by the friars — if you burned it, it made such a terrible smoke that no witch could abide it, an oracle he tested on Catharina Schmid. In 1756, when yet another witchcraft case developed in nearby Brasenbergl, it revolved around a possessed girl who had sought help from the Capuchin friars. So far from helping people to deal with witchcraft through religious means, the Capuchin response encouraged people to look for witches among those they knew. Nor were such beliefs confined to peasants. The court in Obermarchtal called in a Capuchin friar from Riedlingen to undertake exorcisms before each session of questioning and to bless the whip with which Bollman was tortured. This was becoming established practice in Obermarchtal: Father Theobald of the Capuchin house in Biberach had been called in earlier to exorcise Catharina Schmid when she was tried for witchcraft, and during the trial he undertook a journey to Alleshausen, where he reported on the "miserable conditions" of the peasants there, plagued by possessions and demonic attacks. And it was Father Theobald whom Magdalena Bollman wanted to summon, to prove she was not a witch: diagnosing witchcraft was becoming a Capuchin specialism. When Maria Bingasser first accused her daughter Anna of

witchcraft and then withdrew her allegations, the Capuchins at Biberach seem to have been behind what the court termed a “miracle”: after a visit to Biberach, Anna was moved to confess freely that she herself as well as her mother were witches.²⁷

It was not that Sailer was unaware of the Devil, or that he did not share the villagers’ belief in witchcraft. As late as 1771, he was still persuaded that the authorities had been right to execute the witches.²⁸ But the Devil that features in his plays is more like a figure of fun. The hare in *Die sieben Schwaben* looks like a terrifying demon, and it is part of the joke of the play that the peasants can celebrate their hunt for this harmless animal with a processional triumph over the powers of Hell; while *Der Fall Luzifers* (The Fall of Lucifer), written around 1747, the year of the trial, features a Devil who promises his henchmen he’ll make them mayor and district official if they beat up the Archangel Michael for him: St. Michael gets revenge by locking Lucifer in the privy while he is shitting. Sailer probably did not share the kind of extravagant religious passions which the Capuchins were able to mobilize, and it is noteworthy that the order of Premonstratensians to whom he belonged and who ruled the territory and acted as parish priests barely feature in the trials at all.

The Capuchins were an order of reformed Franciscans established during the Counter-Reformation whose influence became increasingly powerful in southern Germany after the Thirty Years’ War. Between 1650 and 1770, their numbers rose in the region as they gained a firm foothold in rural communities by acting as assistants to hard-pressed rural priests, hearing Easter confessions and administering the sacraments. By the second half of the seventeenth century, they were more numerous than the Jesuits, fulfilling the kind of inspirational role in devotional life in small towns and hamlets that the Jesuits played in cities, but their emphasis was always populist rather than elitist, supporting pilgrimage and popular religious practice: in 1806, reforming Catholics building the church structures of the new kingdom of Württemberg blamed the Capuchins for “bigotry and superstition.”²⁹ A house had been established outside the walls of the nearby imperial town of Biberach in 1618, and rebuilt after the Thirty Years’ War in 1661, while at Riedlingen, to the west of Marchtal, a monastery had been erected in the mid-seventeenth century.

The Capuchins certainly contributed much to the reinvigoration of rural Catholicism, a genuinely popular religion by the eighteenth century; but as their role in these witchcraft cases suggests, their success

may have owed more than a little to their intuitive grasp of suffering, especially of women's travails, and their ability to exploit their flock's fear of the Devil. All this, of course, flowed seamlessly into the world of the glorious baroque churches, for the other way to gain protection for one's loved ones or to deal with illness was to go on pilgrimage. Blessings and pilgrimage, however, were not alternatives to belief in witchcraft, but were part of the same religious economy. After all, blessings were a form of exorcism, and when villagers stockpiled pilgrimages, visiting all the churches in the region, or had their animals repeatedly blessed, they did so to ensure themselves against the assaults of the Devil, trying to ward off the calamities they feared would follow.

Sailer's plays also lack any sense of psychological complexity or interiority of the kind that Lessing would provide for his characters barely a generation later. Lessing gave individuality to Jews and to servants whose social position might be thought to make them little more than stock characters. Sailer was no Lessing, and he drew on a different, much older tradition of the comic peasant for his inspiration, where the crafty peasant tricks the Devil, or where woodcuts show him parading a giant phallic nose. The sixteenth-century figure of the boorish peasant was a literary creation for educated townsfolk who could laugh at the rustic world they had left behind. By contrast, Sailer seeks but ultimately fails to bridge the gap between himself and the peasants. His observation of peasant life is shrewd and penetrating, and his great accomplishment is to have recorded Swabian as a complete language with its distinctive intonation and sounds, capable of sustaining its own written literature. Sailer himself, when he intervenes to moralize, speaks in the High German of the student and district official whose culture he shares. It is no accident that the axis of power in the mayoral election at Limmelsdorf is between the priest and the district official: Sailer would have known this only too well. There is a part of Sailer, certainly, who sympathizes with the truculent Veit Balg who has no time for village niceties, and the hero of *Die sieben Schwaben* is the lowly *Bannwarth*. But perhaps, in Sailer's case, the price of reaching an accommodation between the peasant culture that surrounded him and the monastic, small-town world to which he owed his education was to turn the peasants into buffoons. As he did so, he turned their murderous hatreds into village squabbles, and laughed at their pettiness instead of seeing apocalyptic significance in possessions and diabolic onslaughts.

Two near contemporary documents drawn from the same village world — both imbued with the same claustrophobia, the same iron sense

of order, hierarchy, and reputation, and the same pervasive sense of religion — could hardly be more different. For the monk Sebastian Sailer, at once a local and outsider, there was always an escape from the village; for Bollman, there was none. There was no alternative to the network of relationships between neighbors and kinsfolk that could go so comprehensively wrong, leaving the accused woman devoid of any support. It would be too much, perhaps, to expect a man like Sailer to comprehend the agony of a woman like Magdalena Bollman, or even to enter into the sufferings of his possessed female parishioners and their frenzied appeals for help against the attacks of witches.³⁰ More puzzling is the question of whether Sailer's vision of a lovable but boorish peasantry could be maintained only by removing women from its landscape altogether.

Chapter Six

WITCHES' CHILDREN

IN 1628, Hans Merckler, an orphan aged twelve, was accused of witchcraft. He had forced two much younger boys, aged six and eight, to put a milk bucket on a dung heap and place the Devil in the bucket, with a board and chair on top. Perched on the chair, each boy was to forswear God, Mary, and the saints, while the other knelt. Merckler wanted, the witnesses said, to establish “a witches’ school.” In place of the prayers and catechisms children had to learn by heart, everyone was to learn the nonsense verse the Devil had taught him, starting, “Lyrum larum spoon game, old women eat a lot.”

This may sound like a child’s game, but this was not how the authorities saw it. When the other boys’ parents testified against him, Merckler soon found himself taken to the nearby town of Karlstadt, where he was put through a criminal interrogation; eventually, he was brought to Würzburg, the capital of the prince-bishopric, where one of the largest witch hunts ever seen in western Europe was under way.¹ Things looked grim for young Merckler, who seemed to be in league with the Devil and could well have found himself executed for witchcraft. He was lucky. By 1629 he was denying the whole story. Wisely, he asked to be transferred to a different school, that of the Jesuits. Six months later, he was returned to his guardian, who was admonished to bring the child up well and take him to school and church.²

Other children in the prince-bishopric of Würzburg at around the same period were not so fortunate. Valtin Winter claimed that his parents had seduced him into witchcraft: the resulting trial ended in the execution of first the father and then the son.³ In the summer of 1628, fear erupted in the Juliusspital, a huge hospital established by the reforming bishop of Würzburg Julius Echter, which had a school

attached to it. Probably more than 1,200 people died during the witch hunt in this large Catholic territory, and it was in its final stages that children and priests found themselves accused. In all, we know that at least forty children died during the last two years of the panic in the city of Würzburg, about the same number as clerics who also perished during this phase. Not until 1629 was the panic, which had proceeded in waves since 1590, finally over.⁴

It was unusual, though not unknown, for groups of children to be suspected during witch hunts. The most notorious case was in Sweden, in Lutheran Mora, in 1669–70, where hundreds of children testified that they had flown to the sabbath; other episodes occurred at Salzburg in 1675–90, at Calw in 1683–84, and another in 1723 involved thirty children from Augsburg. Such episodes were deeply shocking to contemporaries. For Gottlieb Spitzel, who included the Swedish case in his book *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß* (The Power of Darkness Broken) published in 1687, such dreadful events were proof of the Devil's activity in the world and should be a warning to all parents. Yet, for the witchcraft skeptic Balthasar Bekker, writing in 1691, the Mora debacle, with its involvement of children, was evidence that witchcraft was nonsense, while Eberhard David Hauber, in his vast skeptical compendium on magic, expressed his conviction that the Swedish case had been a shocking miscarriage of justice.⁵

Individual children were occasionally accused of witchcraft or became caught up in trials, though many a witch hunt progressed without implicating a child. Children's allegations were taken seriously in court because witchcraft was a *crimen exceptum*, a crime so serious that the normal rules of evidence, excluding the evidence of minors, could be suspended. Children might become entangled in witch trials as suspects when their parents named them, under torture, as their accomplices; or they might, in the frenzied atmosphere of witch-hunting, give evidence against their parents, often under compulsion. Since only fellow witches could see the Devil in league with an accused individual, when children gave testimony about witchcraft itself (as opposed to statements about what harm had been caused by witches), they readily fell under suspicion. On the whole, authorities did take account of the youth of offenders and assign them milder punishment; but there were also occasions when, as Valtin Winter discovered, childhood offered no protection.⁶

Cases of witchcraft concerning children are among the most disturbing of the European witch hunt. They betray a very different

sensibility toward children, who, contemporaries believed, might be agents of the Devil. But they can also tell us something about children and their imaginative worlds, despite the difficulties of the sources.

All witchcraft cases raise questions about imagination and fantasy, and even the author of the most infamous witch-hunting treatise, the *Malleus maleficarum* of 1486, dealt with the nature of illusion in its opening chapters.⁷ This was especially true concerning children. Authorities were only too aware that children might confess to things that were not true, and they worried about reality and illusion in such cases — after all, the Devil was the master of illusion. Thus, for contemporaries, child witches focused attention on the very nature of fantasy, which is why they also offer some of the few glimpses we have of children's play.

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CHILDREN HAD ALWAYS featured in the central myths of witchcraft, but their moral status was ambivalent. On the one hand, children were the ultimate victims of the witch, who was believed to attack babies, women in childbed, and young children. The sufferings of children and infants form a large part of the grim litanies of illness and death which witnesses recounted in witch trials. Their centrality was reflected in the key elements of the fantasy of witchcraft: witches dug up the bodies of unbaptized children to cook and eat them; the dread witch's salve was made out of the ground bones of infant corpses, and the water in which they were boiled was used to whip up storms and cause hail. The witches' malevolent magic was thus integrally connected to their cannibalistic murder of infants, for they were perverted mothers who preyed on children instead of nurturing them. Demonologists told of fearsome midwife witches who crushed the babies' skulls or stuck needles into their brains to kill them.⁸ The heinousness of the witches' crimes was proved by their attacks on these innocent victims.

Yet not all babies were innocent victims. Changelings, strange half-human infants who cried endlessly and whose hunger could never be stilled, were thought by many demonologists to be creatures beyond the pale of human sympathy who deserved to drown.⁹ And witches might also offer their children to Satan, to be his followers. This is mentioned in the *Malleus* of 1486, and became a standard feature of demonology. Henri Boguet's *Examen of Witches* (1590) opens with the lurid case of little eight-year-old Loyse Maillat, and Boguet serializes her case of

demonic possession throughout the treatise, a narrative device intended to keep the reader's interest as he takes us through the various stages of the legal process, letting us wonder whether she will ever escape the Devil's clutches.¹⁰ Witches' children might testify against their parents, and demonologists supply many tales of such children who had joined the witches' sect until they were finally moved to confess. Peter Binsfeld, whose work was highly influential in Germany at the height of the craze, averred that "experience teaches" that some witches took little boys and girls with them to sabbaths.¹¹

Such children raised an urgent moral dilemma. On the one hand, they were victims of perfidious witches who had stolen their immortal soul. That a mother could do this to her own children was evidence of her utter corruption and godlessness. Her victims therefore needed to be treated with compassion, converted, and reintegrated into the community of the faithful. On the other hand, they were the Devil's brood, children who might engage in diabolic intercourse at witches' sabbaths, and who, like adult witches, deserved to die. This sinister assessment of child witches was strengthened by the belief that witchcraft ran in the blood — a conviction that sat uneasily with the other demonological axiom that witchcraft was always a matter of individual choice, requiring an individual pact with the Devil. Such beliefs tended to foster the idea that child witches ought to be mercilessly rooted out. As Henri Boguet put it, one corrupt child was enough to destroy an entire family.¹²

But who were the child witches? For much of the witch hunt, it was the children of witches who were most likely to be suspected of witchcraft. As the trials continued, however, old women began to be suspected of seducing children who were not their own. Demonologists had long raised this possibility, accusing midwives of offering newborn children to Satan. Whereas most of the Würzburg children were inducted into the sect of witches by their parents, and others, by their playmates, children in later trials increasingly began to claim that they had been seduced by an old woman who was not a relative. The dynamics of such cases were rather different, with youngsters accusing old women of witchcraft, and precipitating witch trials, rather than becoming caught up in trials through their families' involvement. This development opened the terrifying prospect that witches might be at work everywhere, perverting any children. As one child put it, "it's the witches' custom to seduce children."¹³

Artists' images of children reveal the same ambivalence as that

contained in demonological writings. The remarkable series of images of witches by early-sixteenth-century artists like Dürer, Cranach, or Hans Baldung Grien, which pre-date the height of the European witch craze, occasionally include chubby children alongside their erotically charged images of witches. In Baldung Grien's painting of the *Weather Witches*, a putto-like child clutches his mother, peeping out at us from behind her powerful torso, while in his drawing of the *Witch and Demon*, the demonic dragon whose tongue reaches to the witch's vagina is playfully straddled by a naked infant, while another seizes the dragon's tail. In Dürer's tiny circular etching of the witch riding backward on a goat, the bottom half of the image consists of four winged putti whose adorable fatness contrasts with the bony, muscular body of the old flying witch. Are such children ironic counterpoints to the callous power of the witches reminding us of her dread power to kill and destroy them? Do they serve to underline her erotic power, just as Cranach's images of Venus show her with a putto-like Cupid? Or are the children themselves fearful beings, emissaries of Satan?

By the time the witch hunt had reached its height between 1590 and 1630, depictions of children underwent a subtle shift. No longer are they putto-like counterparts to images of witches, but children appear as clothed participants at the sabbath, as well as sacrificial victims. In the cartoonlike illustrations to Guazzo's magnificent *Compendium* of witchcraft (1608), we see naked, defenseless infants being sacrificed to the Devil and child corpses being roasted on spits and boiled in pots; but we also see two children and two adolescents being presented to Satan by their fashionably dressed parents, the youngsters all clad in costly miniature adult outfits.¹⁴ Illustrations of a late German version of Rémy's *Demonolatry* of 1693 show children queuing up alongside the old women witches to kiss the backside of the diabolic goat, while Johannes Francken's elaborate painting of the witches' sabbath features a child in the foreground, dressed like any seventeenth-century child, who fondles the back of the terrifying old witch at the center of the image. So also, in Jan Ziarnko's fold-out illustration of Pierre de Lancre's *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* of 1613, discussed in [chapter 1](#), children fly to the sabbath on their own miniature brooms or ride behind shriveled old women on goats.¹⁵ They are also victims: a child's leg is visible on a banqueting table, an innocent naked child is offered to the Devil, and witches in the background busily boil a child in a cauldron or make a salve out of roasted baby. In a section of Ziarnko's image in the left foreground which seems almost out of character with the rest of the

phantasmagoric image, a group of children stand chatting and dipping their fishing lines rakishly into a pond ([fig. 1.1](#)). They are dressed as children rather than as tiny versions of adults, their gestures reminiscent of Breughel's depictions of children at play. As the written key to the image explains, these children are guarding the crabs and toads which they take to the sabbath. This is hardly a standard demonological idea, and there is no special reason for these children to feature in Ziarnko's diabolic compendium. Rather, it seems Ziarnko has incorporated a scene of children playing into his panoramic vision of witchcraft. Ironically, children's testimony in witchcraft cases does indeed show them at play, and gives us a unique opportunity to see their imaginations at work. But first, we need to return to the themes of the children's confessions.

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WHY DID twelve-year-old Hans Merckler want to set up a witches' school? So far as I know, the idea of a school occurs nowhere in writing about the Devil and witches, and was Merckler's own invention. With it, Merckler took the idea of the sabbath convention of witches and transposed it to the environment he knew, the school. His victims were younger children who were to be trained not to become pious apprentices and servants, but to be the Devil's minions. What do we make of the perilous tower of bucket and plank on the dung heap? His extravagant ritual of renouncing God and the Virgin was not unique: Anna Reuss, aged twelve, also confessed to having stood on a dung heap and denied Jesus, and said that afterward she rode on a cat to the sabbath. She claimed her mother made her do it.^{[16](#)} Dung heaps, then as now, were probably irresistible to children, and when Merckler staged his blasphemous renunciation of Christianity on the manure pile, he desecrated the holy with excrement. The nonsense prayer the children were to be compelled to recite —“lyrum larum spoon game, old women eat a lot”— suggests what children may have felt about the stultifying rote learning that typified Counter-Reformation school education. Valtin Winter, the young boy executed for witchcraft, taught other children a blasphemous prayer he said he learned from his father about cats. So, too, in Augsburg, rumors about witchcraft circulated in the orphanage where two girls whose mother had been executed for witchcraft some years before knew a “witches' prayer” which concerned “white patches, blue patches.”^{[17](#)} What Merckler meant by his ditty about spoons and old women is hard to be sure, but the rhyme does suggest a revulsion for old

women and their appetites: they were the most frequent victims of the witch hunt. By the time he was interrogated at Würzburg, he could tell the authorities another rhyme he had chanted: “Here I stand on the dung heap, and deny Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁸ All these cases indicate how important rhythmic chants, verses, and mock prayers were in children’s play, and how readily children could mock the verities of education or the central Christian mysteries. Instead of being treated as harmless fun, they were taken seriously as fearsome intimations of diabolic power.

Above all, beatings figure repeatedly in what many children said about witches and the Devil, and suggest what a terrifying prospect they were in children’s imaginations. Sometimes thrashings are mentioned in the context of explaining why someone had recourse to the Devil. Merckler saw the Devil standing by the house door one day while his mistress was beating him. One young student aged seventeen claimed the Devil had given him a special string and parchment charm which he could stuff down his trousers to prevent the pain of the rod. Here, witchcraft seems to be a way of coping with the regular violence of school discipline. Just as beating featured prominently in children’s accounts of school routine, so also it was used to force children to confess. Hans Philip Schuh, aged thirteen, was given forty-six strokes and a further seventy-seven strokes during interrogation, treatment which led to his confession of joining witchcraft at school; parents and masters beat children during the eighteenth-century witch panic in Augsburg to make them confess, one child so severely that his finger was almost severed.¹⁹

In Merckler’s case, rumors and talk about children’s games had circulated for some time before the case reached court, revealing a good deal about children’s social life. This particular case is interesting because children, rather than adults, seem to have taken the lead. The witches’ school was a kind of children’s gang, where Merckler could lord it over the kneeling younger boys, just as the older children probably lorded it over him. Even in the institutional confines of the Juliusspital in Würzburg, where fevered emotions were stoked by the fact that child suspects like Hans Merckler were being held there, the idea of the diabolic was part of children’s play. Three children who suffered from possession added to the panic by blaming others for their plight and talking about witches and the Devil. The children knew each other because the hospital housed an orphanage, and more than thirty schoolchildren there were suspected of witchcraft in 1628. The way the rumors and stories spread reflects the importance of children’s social networks: once Merckler had been moved to custody in Würzburg, he

recited the same rhyme as Anna Reuss, while another child confessed he had taught Valtin Winter a prayer about witches and cats when both children were in the hospital. The children came from the same schools, and many mentioned a twenty-four-year-old woman who was also in the Juliusspital and was burned as a witch; interestingly, boys and girls mentioned each other and knew each others' names.^{[20](#)}

Because children made the witch fantasy their own, they also tended to get it “wrong.” Witches generally saw the Devil as a man dressed in somber black, or more rarely green, but Merckler was adamant that he had been red, a striking color that has nothing of the strict inversion of religious imagery implied by black. Merckler insisted that only he could see the Devil, and that he saw him in the presence of others — an unusual occurrence since encounters with the Devil generally took place when the individual was alone: Merckler’s Devil has something of the character of an imaginary friend. Children made outlandish statements, such as the child who said the Devil came down the chimney on a donkey, or they got things confused: instead of whipping up fearsome storms, one child said he learned to make rain.^{[21](#)} Merckler sprinkled water on one boy’s hand to baptize him in the Devil’s name — standard demonology, except that Merckler managed only a hand, not the head.^{[22](#)} Valtin Winter was said to have gone about boasting he could make people “lame and blind,” when witches normally claimed only to harm or kill. His boast suggests that he had mixed up other stories with ideas about witches. Children’s fascination with dirt and insects is also reflected in what they confessed: Niclas Dornhauser of Alleshausen allegedly claimed he could conjure plagues of mice, while Anna Krug, aged eight and a half, said her mistress taught her how to make fleas by poking a thorn into a cherry pip and watching them crawl out; Valtin Winter said his parents and sisters knew how to make fleas out of black wax.^{[23](#)} Children were fascinated by the idea of disrupting the daily life of adult society.

While the occasional insight into children’s imaginations can be gleaned from the testimony of the Würzburg children, their confessions mostly conform to the conventional pattern of adult witchcraft confessions. The child is seduced, as a rule, not by the other children, but by his or her parents, who teach them the basics of witchcraft and take them on flights to the sabbath, where they have sex with each other. It is in the slight variations and minor details — the rhymes, the fleas, and the games — that what is specific to children emerges.

BY CONTRAST WITH these fragments from the 1620s, material from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries involving children allows a far more detailed picture of children's imaginations. The Würzburg cases took place during a major witch panic, where the number of cases threatened to overwhelm the legal system, and so the authorities did not apparently delve more deeply. In later seventeenth-and eighteenth-century Augsburg, by contrast, well after the European witch craze had ceased to rage, the wheels of justice ground at a more leisurely pace. Bureaucratic techniques had developed so that each case generated mountains of paper, as witness statements were painstakingly recorded, checked against the answers of the accused, and then double-checked with the witnesses again. Legal opinions were solicited and official reports by the jailer, doctors, and a host of other experts were sought. But in children's cases, the content of confessions gradually became more idiosyncratic as it grew more detailed. This was because the Councillors (both Catholic and Protestant) involved in these trials were more interested in children and their mental worlds.

From the late seventeenth century on, Lutheran pietism played a significant role in the Augsburg Protestant church. In the 1670s and 1680s, the Lutheran clergy became involved in a series of cases where young people were tempted by the Devil. Pastor Christoph Ehinger published a book on the possessed cobbler, and Pastor Gottlieb Spitzel failed to exorcise the young itinerant demoniac Regina Schiller, while public prayers had been said in Protestant churches for several youths who found themselves in the grip of the Devil.²⁴ Spitzel, who corresponded with Leibniz and with the Pietist Philip Spener, published *The Power of Darkness Broken*, which, as mentioned in [chapter 2](#), included a chapter on the child witches of Mora. He also discussed the case of the unhappy boy Caspar Meyer, who had been seduced by witches and was made to watch their execution.²⁵ An interest in children's education was key to the Pietist project in Augsburg, as it was elsewhere; and Pietists were actively involved in education and in charitable work for orphans.²⁶ Fearing the spread of godlessness and atheism in a town where Protestants had just lost their numerical superiority, and where more Catholic children than Protestant were now being baptized, Augsburg's pastorate emphasized the activity of the Devil.²⁷ Witchcraft and possession, especially when children were involved, were compelling proof that the Devil was real. Children's stories about the Devil found a

ready ear among the Lutheran clergy, and several such cases came before its full synod. Catholic clergy, too, found themselves dealing with child witches; and in 1723 this culminated in the most dramatic outbreak of child witchcraft in the town's history, when nearly thirty children were taken into custody.

The child witches of 1723 were mostly Catholic, and many were orphaned or had stepparents. One after another, they confessed to putting "diabolic powder," teeth, glass splinters, bones, and something that looked like "mouse dung or linseeds" into their parents' beds, causing them to suffer terrible pain or even to put their marriages under strain. They had played sexual games, too, dropping their trousers, "kissing the shameful parts" and beating one another on their "bare behinds." Like other children before them, they produced plagues of mice and fleas. Their desperate parents reacted not by laughing off their behavior as childish pranks, but by denouncing them to the Council, who took them into custody. Several children claimed that an old woman had seduced them into witchcraft, the now classic idea that witches were out to steal and corrupt youngsters. But when the Council interrogated the woman, she adamantly denied that she was a witch, and the case was deadlocked. It took seven years to resolve and cost a fortune in legal consultations, housing and feeding the children, and paying guards to watch over them.

As the children spent longer in each others' company, so their confessions became more elaborate. They described how they had flown to witches' sabbaths and produced elaborate fantasies about the Devil. Yet the Council, which in 1730 had not executed a witch for more than thirty years, and which had considerable experience with child witches, was not convinced that there was sufficient evidence to proceed to torture the old woman, and she continued stoutly to deny any involvement. This stalemate created a dilemma. If the children's wicked behavior could not be blamed on a witch, why were they saying such things? Gradually, the character of the children's confessions changed. They began to describe how they had engaged in masturbation, "milking each other," as one boy put it, or "committing indecency" by means of a sheet. The Council put them on restricted diets and, for the worst children, a regimen of regular beatings, so as to dampen their overactive desires. Eventually, it concluded that the whole problem arose not from witchcraft but from the children's own "evil imaginings and fantasies." Childish sexuality and the capacity of masturbation to generate fantasy was best cured by strict discipline.²⁸

Why did the Council spend so much time and energy plumbing the depths of children's imaginations? The case which had probably done more than any other to put the issue of children's fantasy on the agenda, and created the climate where criminal justice became involved, was a Lutheran case which took place in 1701. The bizarre testimony of Maria Barbara Hueber and her brother forms one of the most remarkable documents of the witch hunt.²⁹ The Huebers were a prosperous merchant family who had a house in the exclusive center of town and owned one of the coveted gardens outside the city walls. Though their fortunes had undergone something of a reverse shortly before the case began, they remained comfortably well-off.³⁰ It all began when Maria said that "Liesel" (Elisabeth) Christeiner and her old mother had seduced her into the sect of witches.³¹ To the astonished group of layfolk and clergy gathered in her father's house, she described being taken to Christeiner's mother's house, where she had entered a room full of masks and diabolic faces. The old woman had thrice drawn a magic circle with a wand colored blue, brown, black, and white, and placing her in the middle of the circle, had separated the child's legs; a huge cat suddenly appeared between them. She had conjured huge mice the size of small cats and had made serpents "two or three fingers wide" that writhed on the floor. Placing three black pots in the room and waving her wand, she had made an old man and an old woman gradually rise from the pots. Hunch-backed witches with long noses came in a group of six or seven, and in the middle of the ring stood a hideous Devil, his face black, with white teeth sticking out, completely bald and with brown horns on his head. There was a clock in the parlor, and she had once summoned up five clocks, one in each corner and one in middle of the room's wooden paneling; the parlor clock had gone on chiming until they vanished again. Another time, she had conjured a flock of birds that flew around the room, and as they soared out of the open window, one scratched Maria's eye. In a vivid story, Maria described how Anna Maria had tied her hands to the clock weights of the big clock that stood in the middle of the parlor. This had caused her terrible pain, but though she had wept and screamed in terror, the old woman would not let her down.³²

Maria's story had little to do with demonological conventions or previous cases of child witches. Its peculiarity allows us insight into a child's imagination on the cusp of the Enlightenment. She spoke of mice, fleas, and lice — vermin associated with dirt — rather than the usual diabolic goat. While cats were often associated with witchcraft, Maria's cat was enormous, a distortion of the everyday, like the clocks that came

and went, the lark-like birds that flew indoors, and the diabolic flight in which she failed properly to get airborne, feeling instead as if she were being lifted up and then suddenly falling. In particular, the snakes seem to have little to do with beliefs about witches — though de Lancre lists serpents and crabs in his extravagant description of the sabbath, few demonologists mention them. Rather, Maria's vision seems to reflect a primal fear of snakes. She even described a talking snake, who was "long and fat" and came to her one night in her own bedroom. This was the Devil in disguise, and it told her the witches would come for her that very day and take her to the sabbath. Maria had screamed in terror, saying she had nothing to do with the witches, and the snake had disappeared. Fortunately the witches had not come, but the same day, she had fallen down a flight of wooden steps and bruised herself badly.³³

The birds and snakes sound like classic animal phobias, of the kind that play such an important role in Freud's account of children's psychology. Freud held that animals can come to be the symbolic targets of the unacknowledged, unconscious love, hatred, and terror which children feel for their parents, so that, as he demonstrates in the case of Little Hans, the boy's unresolved Oedipal conflict became transferred onto an irrational terror of horses. In his analysis of a childhood memory of Leonardo da Vinci's, Freud provides an interpretation of da Vinci's recollection of the vulture that flew down to his cradle, opened his mouth with its tail, and beat against his lips, arguing that this is not a real memory but a later fantasy, arising from unconscious repressed sexual themes.³⁴

Such phobias and fantasies, attached to animals, birds, snakes, and so forth, have probably changed little over the last three hundred years. The dreamlike visions that twelve-and-a-half-year-old Maria recalled dated back many years to when she was a little girl, though it is impossible to know which were recent and which came from her infancy.³⁵ Maria's mother and sister had both died, and she had lived for some time, not with her father and his new wife, but with her grandparents; her grandmother had also died while she was living there. There was every reason for her to feel the complex pull of furious emotions that so often characterize these cases of child witches, many of whom were orphaned and had to cope with stepparents and stepsiblings. And it is surely hard to overlook the sexual subtext of Maria's visions, with the giant cat coming out from between her legs, and her obsession with snakes as dangerous and powerful. In this way, the classic story of demonology was becoming transformed by its encounter with the imaginative

concerns of children.

It was being transformed, too, by its encounter with popular culture, and in particular, with story, myth, and fable whose traces can just be discerned in Maria's story. As discussed in the introduction, the late seventeenth century saw the burgeoning of a printed culture of storytelling, attractive to children as well as adults, with collections like the *Hundstägige Erquickstunden* of 1650 or Johann Praetorius's *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* of 1668 offering its readers a miscellany of stories, many of which concerned witches.³⁶ Children might also have responded to another of Praetorius's creations, the giant Rübenzal, whose deeds were often based on motifs and stories that Praetorius took from the *Faustbuch* and other older works. A collected *Daemonologia Rubinzalii* was published in 1661, its title a tongue-in-cheek reference to demonology that would have been unthinkable a generation before. The mania for stories continued, and Eberhard Happel's massively popular *Größte Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt* (Curiosities of the World), published in 1683 in several volumes, was a gold mine of stories and curious information, some of it concerning witchcraft, treasure seeking, and magic.³⁷ By the 1690s, a clutch of old French demonological classics were being reprinted, this time not for their worth as intellectual treatises, but for their entertainment value.³⁸ There was a thriving publishers' market for stories, and witchcraft had become part of that popular literature.

All this had its effect on what children began to say about witchcraft. Everyone involved in the case was familiar with books. Anna Maria Christeiner owned books, and the children minutely described the book in which she wanted them to sign themselves to the Devil. In one of her statements, Maria described seeing a Devil with a large horse's head, spindly legs, claws, and a tail with a ring, hardly a run-of-the-mill description of the Devil. Where could she have gotten this from? A Devil with a horselike head is precisely what appears in the frontispiece of Gottlieb Spitzel's *The Power of Darkness Broken* ([fig. 6.1](#); see also [figs. 6.2](#) and [6.3](#)), a book Maria's brother Marx mentioned in his testimony, and this was almost certainly the source of Maria's terrifying vision. The children probably also knew all about the Swedish child witches Spitzel described in that book.³⁹



FIG. 6.1. Frontispiece of Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß* (Augsburg, 1687). (By permission of the British Library [8632.b.23])



FIG. 6.2. First page of Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß* (Augsburg, 1687). (By permission of the British Library [8632.b.23])



FIG. 6.3. Page 433 of Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß* (Augsburg, 1687). (By permission of the British Library [8632.b.23])

But what the children said does not seem to have derived from the lugubrious tracts of the Augsburg preachers alone. Maria was clearly fascinated by the old woman's wand and its magical powers. Trials of witches almost never mention wands, but only diabolic powders and salves; and while witches can metamorphose into animals, they rarely produce animals and humans out of nothing. Demonologists also have little to say about wands, but they are mentioned in relation to contemporary magicians and treasure seekers, while the classical witch Circe bears a wand. Maria would certainly have seen pictures of the biblical Witch of Endor, depicted in seventeenth-century Bibles making circles with a wand.⁴⁰ When Maria was baptized, the old woman, Anna Maria Christeiner, sprinkled her in the name of Belial, Mephistopheles,

and Pluto.⁴¹ The reference to Mephistopheles almost certainly comes from the printed story of Faust, which was well known in Augsburg, and which had deep significance for Protestants: Faust, after all, originally studied theology at Wittenberg. Pluto, the Roman god of the underworld, is entirely out of place, but was probably picked up from classical myth, perhaps at Maria's school or through her brother, who would have learned Latin. (By contrast, when Elisabeth Christeiner was goaded by Maria in confrontation, she eventually said that the "Lugenteuffel," the Lying Devil, was speaking out of the girl's mouth, a usage deriving from the moralistic Devil books which provide a devil for every variety of sin.)⁴² In these late witchcraft cases, the basic outlines of the witchcraft story merged with the material of popular myth and story, as they took on more of the imaginative worlds of children.

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IN ANY ERA, the issue over which children's testimony was most likely to diverge from the standard adult confession was sex. Children's understandings of sex are different from those of adults, and develop in phases as the child matures. They can be jealous or appalled by the idea of parental intercourse, and obsessed with feces, or view sexual intercourse as sadistic. Because sex plays a different role in their imaginations, it also emerges in witchcraft confessions with distinctive meanings and associations.⁴³

Central to women's confessions was the story of their seduction by the Devil. Male witches also confessed to diabolic sex, with the Devil usually taking the shape of real women they knew: few men confessed to sodomitical intercourse with a male Devil. In contrast, children's and adolescents' confessions to sex with the Devil can be revealing, not only because they spring from a childish symbolic understanding of intercourse, but because they lack adults' preformed words and narrative structures in talking about sex, so much so that when their confessions were standard, they could fail to persuade. Valtin Winter claimed only that he had "lived in indisciplin" with his girl lover four times, while Hans Philip Schuch said that he had intercourse with a young girl whose "shame" was "warm"; he had shoved "his thing in hers." This went against the standard narrative of sex with the Devil, which stressed coldness.⁴⁴ Other children who confessed during the Juliusspital panic in Würzburg also admitted to kisses, and to "committing shame" with each other and flying out to sabbaths: they did not confess to sex with the

Devil, or with other adults like caregivers or teachers, but only with each other. Like men accused of witchcraft, the boys named real girls as their sexual partners, and described sexual fondlings between real children. So Anna Marielein Fischer, a girl named by many of the other children, said that there was a bed on which they all lay with their lovers at the sabbath, which had been prepared on the Klessberg to which they flew: conventional witches dispensed with beds at their nocturnal revels, but Anna Marielein seems to have had trouble imagining intercourse without beds.⁴⁵

By the late seventeenth century, we have descriptions of diabolic sex by young people that are both detailed and personal. Juditha Wagner said that the Devil had come to her in the shape of a little “whore boy,” who “tickled her,” and put “black wool” into her “shameful parts”; this prevented her from urinating, but the Devil beat her when she tried to take the wool out.⁴⁶ In one highly idiosyncratic confession from about the same time as the trial of the Christeiners, the adolescent Regina Groninger from Augsburg claimed that the Devil came to her in the shape of a mysterious black man who “lies on her whole body, and thus presses on her in such a way that her (if you will excuse the expression) shit goes out of her body”; he “put something pointed like a spindle in the front part of her body ..., from which she felt great pains, but she did not feel that anything was left behind in her body, and when he had to do with her thus, it lasted a quarter of an hour.”⁴⁷ The precision of her description and the lack of diabolic cliché suggest this account comes from a real and deeply traumatic sexual experience. Again, sexual and excremental themes merged in her story about the Devil, a characteristic of children’s witchcraft narratives.

Much of Maria Barbara’s story concerned her body, and she also told a tale about sex. Maria’s “*Bauch*,” or stomach, had become painfully swollen, and her worried stepmother had taken her to see the executioner, to determine whether her malady had natural or supernatural origins. Like many executioners, Hans Adam Hartmann had developed a sideline as an expert in witchcraft and in healing. Having inspected her urine, he visited the girl at home, where he set her on a table, put her legs apart, and saw that “the front body was quite injured and wounded”; he was certain this had been caused by witchcraft. But it was not sex with the Devil which had led to Maria’s sufferings, the usual explanation of this kind of injury to the sexual parts.⁴⁸ Maria described how Liesel Christeiner had taken her to her mother’s house when her stomach was not as distended as it later became, and the old woman had

made circles on her stomach, and had later pressed down on her stomach with considerable force. As she described it, Maria was lying on a bench and could not see what the women were doing to her lower body. When she asked why they were doing this, the old woman had told her that she had a hernia, which she was trying to press out. The stories about the various attempts by Liesel and Anna Maria to cure her merge with her tales about Liesel's sexual advances. Pulling her legs apart, Liesel had inserted two or three fingers into her "front body" and had also "tickled" her, which hurt. Whenever Liesel put her to bed, she would "tickle" her in this way in her "front body." One is reminded of the serpents which were "two or three fingers wide."⁴⁹ Certainly in Maria's mind there was a connection between her distended, painful "stomach" and the sexual torments she had suffered at Liesel's hands, though she also thought the pain had been caused when she swallowed a winding reel from a spindle at Liesel's house.

Maria's brother likewise claimed that he had been physically seduced by the pair, and it was the forty-four-year-old "Liesel" (Elisabeth Christeiner) whom he blamed in particular. She had made him stand on a bench and had taken hold of his "virile member," rubbed it with her spittle, placed it in her "front body," and rocked herself back and forth.⁵⁰ Neither child offered a conventional account of sex with the Devil, though Maria did say that when she refused to sign herself to the Devil, Liesel had sworn on her behalf, whereupon a "chap" appeared; Maria forbore from supplying the conventional demonological sequel of sex with the stranger.⁵¹

Again we seem here to be dealing here with some kind of traumatic sexual experience, though whether Maria's brother Marx (whom both women credibly claimed never to have met, and who made his allegations some time after his sister) had genuinely suffered such an assault from Liesel or someone else is difficult to guess.⁵² The case, which began with the first formal statements on April 1 and was not settled until August 20, involved the entire neighborhood of the Christeiners and many of the Huebers' friends and neighbors; and it required everyone to take the children's testimony seriously.⁵³ Even the legal procedures adopted in the case served to focus attention on the children. Maria's father took pains to keep his own detailed record of Maria's allegations, which he lodged with the Council.⁵⁴ Once the two women had been interrogated, the Council undertook a series of formal confrontations between each woman separately and their various accusers. This was a common judicial technique, which often brought an

accused witch to confess. But in this case, by far the most extended confrontations were held with the children, Maria Barbara and her brother Marx.

Held on three consecutive days, the confrontations lasted most of the day and long into the night, often not ending until midnight, longer than those with any other witnesses. And they were also far more charged. Marx, the more confident of the two, called on the women to “confess” and repent, for they were “tools” of the Devil who must do penance. Pleading with them to tell the truth and save their immortal souls, he gave what the scribe described as a “charming example” of eternity, and begged them to confess before torture was used. Marx was highly articulate and had an uncanny command of preaching techniques; his recorded comments use emotional bullying to achieve their end. While professing concern for each woman’s soul in turn and beseeching them to confess for their own good, he also skillfully reminded Anna Maria and Elisabeth that if they did not confess now, they would soon be tortured. He told the women that he knew how they felt, for until recently he too had been in the Devil’s power and had been unable to speak the truth, but now he was saved; if each of them would only confess, she could be saved, too. His sister Maria was less diplomatic, complaining about her poor, swollen body to Elisabeth, and insisting that she would suffer to the grave, unless both Christeiner women ended “at the stake.”⁵⁵ Maria insisted that her distended body proved that what she said was all true, and she complained that Elisabeth Christeiner was making her pains worse by looking at her. Repeatedly she left the room because the pains she was suffering were so intense.⁵⁶

The scribe’s hurried, vigorous hand suggests how riveting such long confrontations must have been for those listening. His account is demonstrably partisan, and he frequently slips out of the conventional third person used to record all witness statements, noting exactly what they said to each other: “No-one but you seduced me,” “you destroyed me,” “you took me like a calf to the butcher.”⁵⁷ By overriding the normal rules of taking evidence, and prolonging the confrontations so that they became battles to convert the two women, the children were given center stage, and the testimony came to be as much about them as about the old woman and her daughter. The case itself made the power of the Devil manifest in the courtroom, and proved to doubting Christians that the Devil was indeed alive and active in the world. It was a struggle the Christeiners were hard-pressed to win. When Liesel, goaded beyond measure by the repeated accusations of the children, accused Maria of

being a witch since she admitted to having flown to a sabbath, Maria was ready with her retort: she had indeed been a witch, for Christeiner had seduced her, but now she was saved because she had been converted.

In the end, however, the Christeiners did not crack, even under four interrogations, the final one of which included torture with the infamous “Spanish goat,” a bench on which the victim would be placed and beaten repeatedly. Though they were not rich, the two women came from a respectable family of metalworkers and could muster considerable support from their male relatives, from some well-placed members of the elite, and from their local neighborhood, the area near the headquarters of the smiths’ trade, where they had lived for twenty years.⁵⁸ The Council determined that the two children had remained steadfast in their accounts of what had happened, and that it had been justified in torturing the two women; nonetheless, after swearing an indemnity, the Christeiners were released on recall from custody, and confined indoors. The case must have taken a heavy toll on the two women, for the older woman, Anna Maria, died only two years later.⁵⁹

The sheer length of the case, the amount of paper it produced, and the number of people it involved meant that the story the children told became more and more elaborate as time went on. At first, Maria had described the uncanny sensation of being unsure whether she “walked or rode” with Liesel Christeiner past the Eisenberg, down the street, around the church, and out through St. Jakob’s suburb to their garden; soon, this had become a conventional diabolic flight as she described how they rounded the church spire on the same route out of town. The terrible pressure of three long days of confrontation must also have intensified Maria Barbara’s sense of disorientation, and increased both children’s alarm and guilt, for it was clear to all sides that the trial could end with both of the accused women’s burning. This itself may have served to make the children’s story more fantastic, as they struggled to testify in a frightening courtroom. Maria Barbara was clearly a deeply troubled, sick child, with a painfully bloated stomach, sore, swollen genitals, and plagued with terrifying visions. She and her brother may have feared, too, that their parents might not support their story, or that they might lose their affection if they confessed to lying: both repeatedly said that they had been warned by their parents to speak the truth. The case ended in deadlock. No one was convicted of witchcraft, yet neither was it concluded that the children had lied.

As belief in witchcraft ceased to be universal, but became a matter of public debate, witchcraft cases also subtly altered. When children said

they had been seduced by witches, and were given the opportunity to tell their stories in full, their accounts began to escape the paradigms of conventional demonology altogether, mixing themes from childish sexual and animal phobias, from children's games and from myths and fairy tales. By the late seventeenth century, such detailed confessions were powerful stuff, not only because they dramatized the power of the Devil in apparently irrefutable fashion, but because people were beginning to be interested in pedagogy and in children's imaginations. In a town like Augsburg, where the battle between Lutheranism and Catholicism was part of people's mental furniture, Lutherans and Catholics alike attached great importance to the sufferings of children, and saw the Devil's hand at work in their disturbances. The names of all those convicted of witchcraft are recorded in the town's many amateur chronicles, and the records of many of the child witches have ended up in handwritten copies, carefully transcribed by those fascinated by their cases at the time.

Witches' children form a grim chapter in the history of witch-hunting. But they also provide one of the few opportunities we have to find out about the mental worlds of children in the past. Children were beaten at school, at work, and at home. They played on dung heaps, imagined themselves wielding magical powers over fleas, and confessed to sexual fumblings with one another — and freely looted the repertoire of rhymes and tales they knew about witches, Jesus, the Devil, and magic to give shape to their games. Sometimes the authorities who interrogated them tried to find a coherent and consistent diabolic structure in their violent adventures; sometimes they tried to convert, sometimes to punish them; eventually they began to see such stories as “childish imaginings and fantasies.” The sheer power of children's imaginations would become the focus of an Enlightenment interest in children, and in what made them different from adults. Masturbation would become an object of medical inquiry, not proof of the Devil's activity in the world.⁶⁰ The stories about witches, wands, mice, and demons, which people were starting to purchase for pleasure in the late seventeenth century, would in the end become part of a nineteenth-century canon of folklore and fairy tale to be purveyed to children, and they still hold their place in children's fiction today.

Chapter Seven

THE SUICIDAL STUDENT

IN 1680 in Augsburg, Veit the Tailor, aged just eighteen, was undergoing a routine interrogation by the mayor about a series of minor thefts. Leonhart Conrad Rehlinger, the Catholic mayor, was having a hard time dealing with a small crime wave in the suburbs and was probably heartily sick of quizzing petty criminals. This young man, however, was different. In the course of questioning, the youth handed the mayor a tiny booklet he had written himself, which contained in a neat, literate hand, the story of how, out walking with three other students one night in Ingolstadt, he had met the Devil.¹

Our young man and his student friends had encountered a messenger (*Bot*), who had offered them small sums of money. Certain that this was none other than Satan, he had asked his companions whether the mysterious man they called “Little Caspar” might give him money, too. They assured him that this would be a matter of course if he signed a contract.² Inclined to be cautious, but short of money, Veit decided on a provisional pledge, signing on in ink for a period of four years only. Since then, the Devil had kept his side of the bargain, giving him coin from time to time. But now the four years were nearly up and the lad knew he would soon have to make a real contract, signed in blood. Then he would have to start to harm other people and perform acts of malefice like a proper witch.

This tale will remind us of another seventeenth-century character who also made a pact with the devil, the painter Christoph Haizmann, of whom Freud provided a brilliant diagnosis in his “A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis” of 1923.³ There are many similarities. Haizmann and our youth both mentioned two pacts, one in ink and one in blood. Both described a Devil who was bisexual: Haizmann’s had

breasts as well as a large penis; Veit's sometimes appeared in male, sometimes female form. Both met the Devil at a moment of acute psychological crisis. In this essay, I shall use the resemblance of these two cases as an occasion to ponder how we analyze such material. I shall first develop an interpretation which explores what such a case can tell us about society in general. Then I shall consider what a psychoanalytically influenced exploration of such material might look like, turning finally to reflect on the uses and limits of both kinds of explanation.

...

THE INTEREST IN trying to divine the subjectivity of individuals like "Veit the Tailor," who would otherwise be hidden from the historical record, owes a great deal to the tradition of "history from below" and to microhistory. It allowed the human subjective factor to enter into social history and thus into the discussion of class, so that subjectivity was more than just a reflection of one's collective class position. Subjectivities were at one and the same time created by the social and material circumstances in which individuals found themselves, and yet those individuals creatively made their own, idiosyncratic sense of those conditions. Focusing on practices rather than discourses, historical anthropology as it was practiced in Germany gave us a way of talking about parts of identity that are so taken for granted that they might never be articulated in words, elements of which the individual might not even be conscious.

This perspective enabled us to see how a system of power can insinuate itself into people's automatic, unreflective behavior and habits of mind. It can therefore suggest how individuals can become complicit in a regime without ever formally adhering to it. It can at the same time reveal the limits of compliance, and the myriad ways in which people might resist regimes, without subscribing to an explicit program of opposition of any kind. "History from below" has been rather less acknowledged by early modern historians as an influence on how they approach their sources, though it was undoubtedly one of the currents in German new historicist work of the late twentieth century. Early modernists have understood themselves, in the main, as writing out of the influence of Anglophone historical anthropology; and this has meant that they have sometimes tended to be less interested in the dynamics of power.⁴

Christoph Haizmann, like Veit the Tailor, was a Catholic, and Haizmann's story of pacts and exorcism went to the heart of the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation, with whose legacy Freud still lived in nineteenth-century Vienna. The last generation of early modern historians has been busily rewriting the history of the Catholic Reformation, so that we now have a much clearer idea of the ways in which it advanced, and how it altered the pious practices of thousands of peasants and townsfolk. Marc Forster, who has written the most nuanced and complete picture of southern German popular Catholicism we have, has argued that the Counter-Reformation created a vital and genuine lay Catholicism, as new pilgrimages were established, confraternities set up, and catechisms learned.⁵ Trevor Johnson, too, argues in his fine study of the Palatinate that a vigorous popular Catholicism succeeded in setting deep roots, even where one would least expect it. The Palatinate was unlikely to provide fertile soil for Catholicism, because the region had formerly been devoutly Protestant, and the Counter-Reformation was imposed on the population by force, under the leadership of a hostile external power, Maximilian of Bavaria.⁶ Yet popular superstition, Johnson argues, acted as a kind of Trojan horse for the Protestant Reformation, because Protestants had railed against popular religiosity without ever being able to get rid of superstition. When the Catholic church returned to these formerly Protestant areas, it could more easily accommodate the old superstitious practices by condemning the worst abuses but permitting church-sanctioned practices, like blessings and sacramentals, so creating a popular religion peasants would accept. For the Bohemian lands, too, Howard Louthan demolishes the old black legend of Czech Catholicism, showing that by the late seventeenth century, far from being an imposed religion, orthodoxy had truly been reembraced by the people. Catholic practice had become not a matter of outward conformity but of genuine popular piety.⁷ It currently seems to be a historical truism that the Counter-Reformation succeeded. Ordinary people, it seems, gladly returned to a version of Tridentine Catholicism, while hanging on to a set of basically superstitious beliefs and practices, a settlement at which the church more or less connived. Yet what does the adoption of a set of beliefs and practices unified by a powerful ideology like that of the Counter-Reformation really mean? How does it become internalized? And what might be the limits of its adoption?

Here we may get further with these questions by employing the methods of history from below. But the kinds of identity that were important to individuals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were

different. Class was certainly significant: our Veit was a poor country lad who had risen socially by going to Jesuit college, and it was no accident that the Devil offered him the small amounts of money he needed to keep pace with his student peers. But the key to our youth's subjectivity did not lie in his work. Though he called himself "Sartorius" when he was questioned by the mayor, and gave it about that he was a tailor, there is no evidence that "Veit the Tailor" ever took up needle and thread. He would have looked the part, though, with his fine kirtle and new belt from Regensburg and dagger from Augsburg, bought on the proceeds of theft: witnesses commented on his smart outfit, which he falsely claimed had been supplied by his folks back home. An occasional, and a not very good thief (all his pilferings were discovered), he hardly derived his sense of self from these exploits. Indeed, the surname "Tailor" turned out to be yet another deception. When the Augsburg Council — no slouch when it came to mounting inquiries — contacted all the people the young man had mentioned, it discovered that his real surname was Karg.

What clearly obsessed Veit Karg was the Devil. His story allows us to explore how the Counter-Reformation impacted those like Karg who lived through it. Instead of assessing, as the historiography usually does, the question of the Counter-Reformation's success or failure — did baroque Catholicism make disciplined converts out of a superstitious peasantry? (a question that ultimately leads to a dead end because we have no way of measuring popular piety beyond adherence to pious practice) — we can explore at a deeper level how Catholicism shaped the subjectivities of its adherents. How far might individuals still evade, at least in part, the Counter-Reformation's attempt to win their hearts and minds?

The Counter-Reformation church was an institution of formidable intellectual, institutional, and emotional power. Karg was a product of it. It was the existence of the Jesuit college and university in Ingolstadt, three hours away, which gave a quick-witted country lad like him the chance to escape destiny. The Jesuits were the overlords of Oberdolling, Karg's home village — they rebuilt the local castle in 1649 — and he was the sexton's son. Sextons were part of the clerical proletariat, layfolk with a smattering of education who earned little and were frequently accused of engaging in magic. By coming to the notice of the Jesuits as a bright pupil, he won a one-way ticket out of Oberdolling and fulfilled his parents' aspirations of social mobility. Karg was aged twelve when he moved to town; his parents paid for his lodgings, and he could study

alongside other, richer students from families all over the region. By 1680 the Jesuits had made a huge impact on intellectual life. Their high-quality free schooling for youngsters was attractive to elites, even to Protestants; and they were imaginative teachers who knew how to motivate their pupils by getting them to perform plays or undertaking excursions outdoors.⁸ They were invited into universities to revitalize intellectual life; indeed, in universities like Prague they had gained a stranglehold on university education that would last for generations. At Ingolstadt, Jesuits had been invited into the university as early as 1549, and the university rapidly became the powerhouse of the Counter-Reformation, deliberately designed as a counterweight to Lutheranism at the University of Wittenberg.⁹

The vast barrack-like buildings of the Jesuit colleges dominated the tiny towns in which they were placed. The Jesuits cornered key sites, carving out enclaves in the heart of town. Their buildings were instantly recognizable, their imposing multistory blocks and internal quadrangles creating an impression of uniformity and regularity.¹⁰ Like a fine mesh they spread over the southern German countryside, a network so dense there were mathematical tables to calculate the distance in walking hours between each of the foundations.¹¹ The large and dramatic churches the Jesuits built, open to layfolk, offered a new and overwhelming sense of the divine: in Munich's Jesuit church, the daylight streamed in on the brilliant white stucco, and the fixed pulpit — an innovation — dominated the cavernous nave.¹² These vast modern buildings with their clear and totalizing iconographic programs had little in common with other urban churches and their private chapels, accretions of altars, images, and donations over the centuries; still less with modest rural churches like that of Oberdolling, where Karg's father was sexton. This Jesuit landscape was the world Karg knew and could never escape. His wanderings in his brief life shuffled between Regensburg, Ingolstadt, and Augsburg, all towns that boasted Jesuit colleges.

Karg remained a son of the Jesuits. Yet his behavior is studded with what we might term moments of subversion, in the sense that we can see him making use of the cultural symbols around him to express his distress. Most obviously, he went to the trouble of writing out his own account of his meeting with the Devil, as if he were trying to impose his own authorship on the events that were to sweep him up. It is a small booklet made by folding two sheets of good paper in half, so that it resembles a quarto tract; the final double page is blank save for a blot.

The hand is regular but not elegant, and it has nothing of the graceful penmanship of the notarially trained secretary who filed it, and noted the contents of what he termed this “*Zettul*,” or note, on the back. Karg takes too much ink as he refills his quill, creating uneven blotches, and his lines gradually sag toward the right as he moves down the page. Yet the writing is well spaced to cover a full three pages, and the composition has no crossings-out or hesitations except for the names of his three companions, which look as if they may have been added later. Almost certainly this is a clean copy of a narrative Karg had taken the trouble to write out more than once. The booklet concludes with the words “*Omnia ad maiorem Dei gloriam*,” the Jesuit motto, as though he were attempting to make sense of what happened by writing a narrative of a miracle. However, he unfortunately chose to hand it not to a priest, but to the mayor. As a result, he ended up in prison to face far worse than a routine questioning by the mayor for theft. He became the object of a full criminal interrogation by the Augsburg Council.^{[13](#)}

Indeed, for all his use of the Jesuit motto, the young man was anything but a representative new model Catholic that the Counter-Reformation wanted to create. For a start, he was a petty thief and, as it transpired when the Council questioned him, a would-be arsonist. He had been especially tempted by church collection boxes. Then, instead of the sexual asceticism practiced by the Jesuits, Karg claimed to have led a life of lurid dissipation. He had squandered money on whores, paying one woman provocatively dressed in black with a red face to have sex with him — his friend the “pilgrim” had brought her back to their lodgings after nightfall. Karg had paid the most and she slept the whole night with him; and they had had sex “three or four” times in all, and he had had sex about eleven times with probably four other young women — we can hardly miss the note of sexual boasting on the part of this eighteen-year-old.

His Catholicism, too, was riddled with the kind of diabolic superstitious practice the church was trying to root out. In his booklet, Karg confessed that four years before, the Devil had given him not only coin but a magic charm. It consisted of a piece of parchment inscribed with Greek and Latin words and with three strings, “from a hanged person.” This was a classic mixture of body magic, word magic from ancient “magical” languages, and diabolic spell; and when he had finally thrown it into an oven, it had burst into flame. He had sewn this into his trousers to help against “stabbing, shooting” and — more mundanely but in the student Karg’s case, infinitely more practically — to protect

himself from beatings. The Jesuits loomed as punitive figures in Karg's tale, anything but the friendly educators as whom they were famed.¹⁴ Using this charm, he was cocking a snook at the legitimate authority of the Jesuits — who only punished him for his own good. And by resorting to image magic he was engaging in the illicit use of supernatural power against which the Counter-Reformation church was campaigning.

All this, of course, also underlined how closely superstitious and devout practice were related, for both revolved around images and items to be worn on the body: Karg had owned an agnus dei and a scapula, but could no longer bear to wear them. The Devil would not have it, he said, and so he had hidden them in his bedstraw, to the consternation of the civic official who told him these things “belong on your neck, and not in the straw.” Those who sought to help Karg repeatedly tried to get him to look at holy images: the “iron master,” or jailer, advised him to look at the *pieta* in the prison, while Mayor Rehlinger counseled him to gaze at the crucifix in his office when Karg insisted the Devil was in the room. After his first criminal interrogation, Father Jacob kitted him out with a new agnus dei and a picture of St. Ignatius Loyola.¹⁵ The weapons of the Catholic church simply replaced the Devil's instruments.

Indeed, there is a certain logic in Karg's behavior, which reversed the categories of the Catholicism. Like all witches, he forswore God, the Virgin, and all the saints and took the Devil in their place. Even his pact was like an inversion of entering religious orders, as if the first four years of the pact were a novitiate. When he stole, he was taking what he needed instead of begging, as students like him were expected to do, and as he had had to do ever since his maintenance grant from his parents had shrunk, leaving him dependent on a few bowls of soup a week the Jesuit fathers gave him. It is no accident that the fateful encounter with the Devil concerned cash, or that his three fellow students had the routine access to coin Karg craved: as he presents it, their social status was secure.¹⁶ The Jesuits and his parents had proved themselves to be unreliable providers, and neither did the Devil — though he did offer coin from time to time — give a regular allowance, far less untold treasure.

Can we read Karg's behavior as a variety of what James Scott would term a “hidden transcript,” a refusal to accept the existing relations of power around him, both secular and religious? Theft and arson are common forms of resistance, while spirit possession, Scott argues, can be “a quasi-covert form of social protest,” one of the “arts of political disguise.”¹⁷ It is certainly true that by writing down his story and giving

it to the mayor, Karg escaped the world of Jesuit spiritual discipline. By failing to try the obvious cure for his spiritual ills and get himself exorcised by a priest, he was refusing to become yet another “miracle cure” to be listed in the church’s arsenal of miracles.¹⁸ But there were limits to his resistance. He was soon begging for a good confessor, for a comforter, and finally for a Jesuit priest.¹⁹ By staging his diabolic seductions in a pub, he reflected the Counter-Reformation’s hostility to tavern culture — and when he was in Regensburg, he chose to lodge in a Lutheran tavern, too, the Black Eagle, where he led a debauched life. He reflected the church’s idea that Protestantism was associated with sin. Indeed, though he replaced the authority of the clergy by that of the town Council, he used the mayor in much the way the Counter-Reformation advocated that one should use a confessor, unburdening himself of a whole series of additional sins he had committed, such as fornicating with whores and conversing with the Devil, matters not directly connected with the incidents about which he was being questioned.

Repeatedly, Karg tried to involve his interrogators directly in his quest for salvation. When Mayor Rehlinger interrogated him, Karg rolled his eyes, grimaced hideously, and kept gazing at the oven, saying he could see the Devil standing there. The mayor exhorted him to trust in God, assuring him that the Devil could do nothing against the law. Unusually, Rehlinger’s protocol of the interview employs the first person: it is clear that this particular miscreant had got under his skin. This case, he noted on the report, was beyond his competence, better dealt with by “my lords” of the Council. So, too, when Rehlinger’s men transferred Karg to the irons when he was in prison, and while he faced criminal interrogation by the Council, he continued to say he could see the Devil, and the scribe noted that his face changed color, now pale, now scarlet. In this way, Karg inveigled civic officials into becoming participants in his spiritual drama.²⁰

Was Karg’s behavior a socially learned script, or was it his own creation? One obvious source is the *Faustbuch*, known in print since 1587. A Protestant work featuring Dr. Faustus of Wittenberg, it was known by Catholics, too, and there were other real examples of pact makers. Around the mid-sixteenth century, a young Tübingen student made a pact with the Devil that allegedly still exists in the university archives; and in Wittenberg, Veit Glockner had been freed from the Devil by none other than Dr. Martin Luther himself.²¹ Whether or not Karg had read the *Faustbuch*, the Devil in the shape of a beautiful woman, the

mysterious pilgrim who acts like a Faust figure, the regular gifts of coin, and the students could all have stepped out of its pages. Forswearing God, Mary, and the saints was part of the standard procedure in becoming a witch, and many accused witches mentioned not only swearing but concluding a pact. In the second half of the seventeenth century in Augsburg, young men making pacts with the Devil enjoyed something of a vogue: the young Protestant lads Johannes Matthäus Lutzenberger and his friend Georg Mayr had made a pact with the Devil back in 1661; while Regina Schiller carried several written pacts with her in her peregrinations all over southern Germany, one written in her own blood.²² A decade later than Karg, Jacob Schmidt, probably aged eighteen, also concluded a pact with the Devil and was lucky to escape execution: Juditha Wagner, the orphan girl who had led him astray, was executed.²³ Cases like these were among the influences that led another Lutheran pastor to write *Daemonologia*, a chronicle of his attempts to save a possessed cobbler in Augsburg, appearing in 1681, the year after Karg's case; and as we have seen, a few years later the Augsburg Pietist Gottlieb Spitzel would pen yet another tract on the dangers of witchcraft.²⁴ For Catholics and Protestants alike, the late 1670s and 1680s were a time of spiritual crisis and renewed fear of the Devil: in 1680, 1681, and again in 1684, Marco de Aviano, a famous Capuchin priest and exorcist, preached to mass crowds in Augsburg.²⁵

It is just possible that Karg had also heard of the case of Christoph Haizmann, the possessed painter: after all, he moved in the southern German Catholic circles where this recent miracle might have been known. However, Haizmann's case was not publicized in print, and is unlikely to have been as famous then as it is now. There are, then, many materials on which Karg could draw, and his behavior made sense in a culture which thought it possible that the Devil could make a pact to take an individual's soul. But the ways in which it made sense were very much his own, and for this reason, Scott's notion of "hidden transcript" does not quite capture the attitude to authority involved. For though Karg seemed to be mounting a disguised attack on the authority of the Jesuits (which was both political and religious), he never got far beyond their terms of debate. Though he vented his despair and fear, and though his behavior was an implied critique of the Jesuits' fatherly authority, we risk reading too much intentionality into his behavior, seeking resistance to power in all kinds of behavior which may have been ambivalent rather than rebellious.

TO THIS POINT we have considered Karg's behavior as a social script, analyzing his subjectivity in relation to social structures. But does this really give us his internal world? What happens if we relate Karg's case to that of his famous predecessor, the failed melancholic painter Christoph Haizmann? How does it look if we employ the methods of psychoanalysis?

There is little in the material of the Haizmann case that Freud had to hand to suggest we could ever get beyond the fathers' formulaic account of possession by demons and successful exorcism, the bread and butter of every successful pilgrimage shrine. This is unpromising evidence for an individual's inner world. Freud himself was well aware of the limits of his sources, and there is more than a hint of whimsy in his essay. Far from offering the case as a "proof" of the truth of psychoanalysis, he teases his readers that only those already convinced of the truth of psychoanalysis will find his interpretation convincing.

It is a bravura analysis. From the fact that Haizmann took the Devil as his father, and that his melancholia followed on his "parent's" death, from the frequent use of the number nine in his account of his story, and from the double pact, Freud brilliantly deduces that Haizmann had a complex relationship with his father, and a conflicted sexual identity. Once again, it seems, like the neurotics Freud encountered in his Viennese practice, Haizmann was suffering from an unresolved Oedipal conflict.

Freud shares the problem of the lack of verifiability of his interpretation with historians. So what sets Freud's interpretation apart from other forms of historical writing, and why are so many modern readers unconvinced? It is Freud's interpretation of numbers that most sticks in the throats of his readers: as he attributes significance to the nine months, claiming that such apparently trivial details characteristically betray the unconscious fantasies at work. The number nine, he argues, refers to pregnancy and, by implication, to Haizmann's repressed desire to be in the feminine position in relation to his father, and to bear him a child. At the same time, he fears castration by his father. He is caught between two contradictory and powerful desires, between love and hate, and his father's death brings on melancholia. This, most modern readers find, is an analysis too far. One obvious objection is that seventeenth-century people thought that pregnancy lasted ten months, not nine, so that the connection Freud makes is

mistaken. But it is the apparent arbitrariness of Freud's seizure on this insignificant detail, and his connection of it to a fantasy that appears both shocking and far-fetched, that irritates readers. It is not like a normal inference from source material of the kind a historian would make, and the unconscious fantasy that is betrayed is unlike the rational thought reconstruction that historians attempt.^{[26](#)}

And yet Freud may not be wrong to pay attention to numbers. It is clear that in Karg's confession, too, the number four plays a very significant role. His first pact ran for four years, just as Haizmann's ran for nine. If the figure four was a numerical symbol for Karg, I do not know to what it may have referred, but this does not prove it was not psychologically significant. There are, however, other ways in which the number mattered. Karg keeps returning to the issue of four years because it allows him to date the moment of his initial seduction and corruption. The first pact was made just over four years before, when he was aged thirteen, and had been at Ingolstadt for over a year. Its themes thus concern the Jesuits and his life as a poor, would-be student. The four-year pact means that Karg, now eighteen, is in limbo. His four-year contract is up, he is nearly an adult, and yet he has not signed a second bond. The story about the pact thus allows Karg to perform the same psychological maneuver as Haizmann. Now the issue must be decided, and the authorities must help: Can Karg be prevented from signing another contract with the Prince of Darkness? Can Haizmann get his pact back from the Devil?

There is also something disturbingly iconoclastic in Freud's interpretation: that, for Haizmann, God and the Devil are in the end interchangeable. Haizmann, according to Freud, is in search of a father to replace the father he has lost, and this is why his pact with the Devil explicitly promises that he will be the Devil's son. Thus when Haizmann classes as "diabolic" his visions calling him to join the Fathers, he implicitly recognizes this. The role of the father in Freud's analysis is the element that Michel de Certeau, his most brilliant commentator, develops, seeing it as connected (in Lacanian terms) with the law and with language itself, an insight which he extends into an inquiry into the authority of psychoanalysis itself.^{[27](#)} (One might wonder whether this is a displacement on Certeau's part of an inquiry into the authority of the church.) Punishing, vengeful authority figures certainly peopled Karg's emotional landscape, from the Jesuits whose beatings he feared to the authorities at Sandersdorf who shackled him at Oberhausen, where he was beaten "with a deer catcher." Though he did not — unlike Haizmann

— say that he wished to become a son of the Devil, his diabolic contract, whether based on the idea of a novitiate or on a model of apprenticeship, did imply that there was a more powerful figure with whom the contract was made. Since relations of authority in the seventeenth century were habitually cast in paternal terms, even down to dubbing the jailer the “iron father,” Freud’s analysis of Haizmann is suggestive about what might be at work in Karg’s case, too.

Certeau’s reading of Freud is that Haizmann only seems to be cured; in fact, his unresolved mourning is simply transferred to another collective father, the Brothers of Mercy, who act as his father substitute; so that the question then becomes how psychoanalysis can claim to be more than yet another medium in which the same conflicts can be played out.²⁸ Here, however, he is sidestepping Freud’s radical conclusion that the Devil and God are equivalents in Haizmann’s religious structure, which is that of baroque Catholicism as a whole. As a historian I find Freud’s lack of sympathy to the religious thinking of a past age an obstacle, for it is precisely Haizmann’s adoption of the Devil that causes the problem in the first place. Freud, that is to say, is right about Haizmann but not about baroque Catholicism, for concluding a pact with the Devil makes you a heretic, not an orthodox Catholic. However, Freud does illuminate how it was that the structure of the baroque religious imagination could easily allow this kind of religious collapse to happen, and to be interpreted within the religious framework.

But though it is Freud’s daring conclusions about Haizmann’s relations to his father that is the “interpretation” with which most of his critics take issue, it is not the only interpretation he gives.²⁹ For, like Haizmann’s double pact, Freud offers a double interpretation of Haizmann’s case. In later sections of the essay, Freud considers the reason for the existence of the two pacts, the course of the illness, Haizmann’s further visions, and the outcome. As Freud explains, Haizmann eventually joined an order and so his livelihood was guaranteed, thus solving at a stroke the problem of how he was to make a living if he could not paint. By joining the Hospitallers, Haizmann, in Freud’s view, became an infant. The “poor Devil,” as Freud terms him, gives up on life by becoming a monk and entering into a state of nirvana; no wonder *Knödel* and other good things to eat featured so powerfully in his visions before he joined the order. And though Freud does not underline the connection, he mentions in this section the role of Mary, the Mother of God, on whose birthday the first successful exorcism took place, who appeared to him in his visions, and at whose shrine he found

healing. All these details are signposts toward another level of the illness, namely his relation with his mother and to the breast, which goes back to the prelinguistic phase of infancy. Melanie Klein was later to theorize this whole area of experience in much greater depth; but though Freud does not explicitly pursue it here, he is clearly aware that the relation to the mother played just as great a part as to his father.

It is much more difficult to see how one could arrive at a similar level of psychological insight in Veit Karg's case. Karg's breakdown was not triggered by a parent's death — both his parents were alive and still living in Oberdolling, as the inquiries ascertained. They are barely mentioned in his interrogation, and there are no details which might license us to conclude anything about Karg's relationship with his parents. However, authority figures do repeatedly emerge in Karg's story. In the handwritten document that Karg handed over to Mayor Rehlinger, he made it clear that he feared the Jesuit fathers, who would punish him. The document as a whole concludes with a series of appeals to "my lords," larded with the adjective *streng*, an interesting choice of honorific, for it means severe. The story Karg told concerned how he and three other students met a mysterious "man" with money, who wants their complete obedience. By writing the document and by handing it over to the mayor, Karg ensured that he would be imprisoned and interrogated by "my lords," as indeed he was, in minute detail: 157 questions were put to him in his first criminal interrogation alone. All this suggests that dealing with punitive father figures was a major theme of Karg's inner world.

Karg seems to have sought out people in authority, and he knew how to ingratiate himself with them, becoming an object of their concern. This was, after all, the talent that had helped get him into Jesuit college in the first place. When, some months before his interrogation, he was picked up by the Protestant mayor Paul von Stetten for lodging in a disreputable doss house without a permit, he addressed the mayor in Latin, telling him he wished to become Protestant — alone of the dossers, he was permitted to remain in town. Stetten was a highly educated patrician whose descendants would include the greatest eighteenth-century historians of Augsburg, so the appeal to their common knowledge of Latin was well judged. He then captured the attention of Christoph Ehinger, the Protestant assistant pastor at Holy Cross, who sent him to be converted.³⁰ How serious his intentions were is unclear (and at least one beady-eyed witness said she was not convinced, as she had seen him several times at Mass in the Jesuits' church).³¹ From the moment he

was apprehended, Karg asked for a confessor, at first appealing circumspectly to the Council to send whatever kind of confessor they should think fit (leaving it up to them to determine whether he was Catholic or Protestant), and then begging for a Jesuit. And though Mayor Rehlinger passed the case over to the Council, he did not manage to get rid of it. Whether by accident or because of his interest in the case, Rehlinger was repeatedly ordered by the Council to make further inquiries, superintend Karg's stay in prison, and obtain professional reports from surgeons, the jailer, and so on. Time and again, Karg placed himself in positions where he could monopolize the "strict" attention of those in authority, as if he were crying out to be punished.

Karg had two names, and two identities. By presenting himself as Veit the Tailor, he tried to escape his past as a convicted thief. Once the authorities worked out his real identity, he knew he was doomed. The choice of the alias is interesting, for he called himself both Veit the Tailor (*Schneider*) and Veit Sartorius or Sartory, drawing attention to his skills in Latin. He clearly liked to switch between passing himself off as a student or as a tailor. Tailors had something of a reputation for effeminacy, and as we shall see, there is more than a hint of sexual ambiguity in Veit Karg's tale.

Something about Karg's extravagant tale of debauchery and sexual license in the pubs on the edge of Augsburg does not quite ring true, even though the "pilgrim" and his other companion corroborated his stories. The Council was evidently either curious or suspicious, for it not only checked his story but questioned him about how much he paid for every prostitute. During his first interrogation, Karg admitted that he had once had sex with the Devil in the form of a virgin. She had goats' feet, though, so he was well aware that this was just a disguise. In later questioning, Karg insisted that the Devil had appeared to him as a virgin; but at other times, Karg described a Devil in male form. At one point, he said that the Devil had appeared as a cat, a dog, often as a caterpillar, and that when he sat down, he was a man — interestingly, he forgot to mention any female form on this occasion. For whatever reason, the Council seems to have been generally suspicious of how Karg attributed gender to the Devil.

Why was the Council so concerned about this issue? About a month after he was taken into custody, Karg began complaining that he could not sit down because his testicles were so painful. Rehlinger was told of this by the "Iron Father," the jailer, who knew the case and worried that this might be because he was having sex with the Devil while in prison.

Rehlinger sought medical advice and the doctor and barber-surgeon noted that Karg's testicles were swollen to the size of two fists and were as hard as stone. The cause, they opined, could be retention of semen, or it might be brought about by overindulgence in sexual activity. But, as Mayor Rehlinger pointed out, Karg had had no opportunity for sexual congress with whores since he had been in prison. So if sexual activity were the cause of his enlarged testicles, there was only one explanation: he must be having sex with the Devil in the prison itself.

In September, more than three months after he had originally been imprisoned for criminal trial, Karg was interrogated for the third time. Now the Council determined that torture was to be threatened, and applied if no confession was forthcoming on the issue of whether the swelling on his privy parts was caused by "unfitting intercourse with the Evil one."³² There were significant contradictions in his statements: How could he have said that the Devil appeared to him as a woman when he was in irons, and yet he did not have sex — what was the point? After all, as his stories about the whores showed, he was given to sexual pleasure. Why was he now saying that the Devil only appeared as a man? In that case, where did the swellings on his privy parts come from? If, as he now admitted, the story that the Devil had appeared to him as a virgin and had sex with him when he was in irons had been a lie, then why?

When the interrogators had worked through the list of questions which had, as usual, been carefully drawn up by the Council beforehand, they applied a comparatively mild (by their lights) form of torture, drawing up the victim on a rope with his hands behind his back, but with empty weights. Then they departed from the script, concentrating on the issue of the Devil's sex: Why had he lied? Karg denied that the Devil had appeared to him in the form of a woman while he was in irons desiring sex: "in irons [yes] but before his arrest. It was however true that he appeared to him as a man, as he had said before, and promised him three times that he would help him get out, if he would truly sign." The interrogators asked him repeatedly "for what reason he had lied on this point?" to which he replied that "he thought they would believe him and give him a more merciful verdict, and he thought it was all the same when he had appeared to him, and whether as a man or a woman." He stuck to this even though the interrogators told him "this did not add up, he must have something else behind it, and what then was this?"³³

The Council had more than enough evidence to impose the death penalty on Karg. He was a confessed thief, he had attempted arson, and

he had made a pact with the Devil. It seems gratuitous that they should have used torture to settle this seemingly trivial detail about sex with the Devil. It may be, however, that what they feared was the unspeakable: that Karg had had sex with the Devil in male form.³⁴ When women were accused of witchcraft, sex with the Devil was a routine confession, and there was a ready language to hand for talking about how the Devil had seduced them, how he had offered them marriage, how his cloven hoof, tail, or smell had given him away, and how sex with him had been unpleasurable. But in the case of men, this narrative was a problem — the Devil's usual male persona got in the way. It upended normal sexual assumptions. For instance, it was difficult for a female Devil to propose marriage or initiate sexual contact. Usually, therefore, where men had sex with the Devil, he appeared in female form, often in the shape of a real named woman rather than in thinly veiled demonic guise, and the question of who took the initiative was not discussed. But what if he had sex with a man in male form? In the end, this final mystery was not resolved: Karg steadfastly refused to confess any more, and denied that he had ever had sex with the Devil, even though he had confessed to this before.³⁵

We will never know whether Karg was homosexual, but as Freud argued in the Haizmann case, it does seem clear that issues of sexual identity were involved in his case. They were surely on the Council's mind when they interrogated the young man. To this extent it does not appear too far-fetched to suggest that some kind of Oedipal conflict may have been at work, for it is during the Oedipal phase that sexual identity and orientation is laid down; while at a deeper level, the kind of utter disorientation, suicidal depression, and incapacity to free himself from a punishing father suggest that there may well have been some pre-Oedipal disturbance in his relation to his mother as well. Tailor and student, Jesuit and thief, Karg's tortured identity was worked out in the only idiom he knew, the idiom of religion. By handing his manuscript booklet to Mayor Rehlinger, Karg guaranteed that he would be punished by the strictest fathers there were, the Augsburg Councillors. There was no absolution to be had from them, no penance that would offer him a way back into the community. On 7 September 1680, Veit Karg was executed for his many crimes, his death a shocking example for all Augsburgers. In effect, Karg committed suicide by proxy.

...

HOW DO WE choose between these different forms of explanation? Karg's case can suggest how difficult it was for such socially upwardly mobile young men to become socialized into the Jesuit-influenced elite, even, as in Karg's case, at its lower, provincial end.³⁶ It can suggest both the success and the limits of the Catholic church's attempt to win back hearts and minds: Karg's diabolic pact turned Catholic symbolism upside down, replacing God, Mary, and the saints with the Devil; but it was also orthodox. He had a scapula and an agnus dei as well as a religious image, and if he refused to wear them, that also testified to his conviction that a truly pious Christian *would* use such blessed objects to counter the Devil's attacks. Throughout his interrogation, he worried about confession; asking for a confessor, listing among his crimes the fact that he had taken communion unworthily and that he had not confessed all his sins. Here he had certainly internalized the baroque Counter-Reformation message about the centrality of confession to devotional life. On the other hand, the idea of making a pact with the Devil was common to both Protestants and Catholics, and Karg's version of it owed a good deal to the student milieu, regardless of confessional allegiance. Perhaps this was why Karg was soon toying with converting to Lutheranism, staying in the Black Eagle, a Lutheran pub in Regensburg, and dangling before Mayor von Stetten the bait that he would convert.

In Karg's inner world, the Jesuits were punishing fathers, yet he also continued to ask for their aid. For this reason, Karg seems less an example of Scott's "art of disguise" than a character who felt both anger and attraction toward the powers that be. Scott's analysis of the "hidden transcripts" that lie beneath apparently compliant behavior runs the risk of valorizing resistance, so that, as he analyzes it, all kinds of popular culture, from the "world upside down" through carnival to trickster tales give us the arts of disguised political resistance we crave. Scott focuses on the moment of repression, the rage that he posits we feel as we have to choke back our anger when we must show compliance to authority — a somewhat idealizing description of aggression that would seem to fit men better than women.³⁷ That Scott appeals to a universal emotional response as the touchstone of the truth of his theory is interesting here, for it is not clear that this is always the response that such confrontations elicit or, indeed, that this is how power usually works, for its effects are usually both far more insidious and seductive.

If we can make use of a case like that of Karg to explore the conflict between an individual and their society, why should there be any need for the historian to investigate their internal worlds further? What

interest can the historian have in the sexual uncertainties of an individual like Karg, even granted that it could be legitimate to ask about it? An explanation that focused on the potentially subversive script of Karg's behavior would not, in the end, explain the roots of his despair, or why he took such a self-destructive route out of his misery.

What we are not doing when we use psychoanalytic ideas is proving the universal truth of the Oedipal complex. When Freud's critics allege this, they are wide of the mark.³⁸ Rather, we use the theory as a heuristic device. By pointing to repeated themes in Haizmann's testimony, by analyzing the image of the Devil, Freud is able to make sense of Haizmann's psychic world. Freud's use of the Oedipal theory here helps to explain how these elements cohere, and why the lack of resolution of the Oedipal conflict should have had such a catastrophic outcome. Without such a theory, we are left with little more than a literary analysis of the text, highlighting key images but unable to explain why they led to a breakdown. Though the material of Karg's case is not so rich, there is enough to indicate that father figures played a powerful role in his mental world and that he was an individual who was seeking to be punished.

But let us be clear about the limits of such an enterprise: as Freud himself joked, if you do not accept the existence of the Oedipal complex, you are unlikely to be convinced of Freud's analysis of Haizmann. One of the dilemmas the historian who uses psychoanalysis faces is that he or she cannot write as if just for the psychoanalytic faithful. The persuasiveness of the interpretation needs to draw, too, on factors that those who are skeptical about psychoanalysis can also find compelling. At the same time, of course, a psychoanalytically influenced explanation will also expand our idea of what kinds of motivations can cause people to act. It challenges historians to go beyond purely rational reconstructions of what makes individuals behave in particular ways, considering not just how they might have articulated their intentions, or how we might impute a rationale to them, but exploring the unconscious forces that will also have driven their behavior.

The historian does not just seek to provide psychological examination of an individual, however, so what is historical here? Karg's case suggests how in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, individuals expressed their mental turmoil in the idiom of the demonic. What makes this of wider significance is that they were part of a culture where one could talk about the Devil in this way but be believed rather than be diagnosed as psychotic. The preparedness of a whole society not only to take such a

case seriously, but to believe that the forces of evil were in league to attack Christendom, also needs to be explained in relation to the nature of the fears such fantasies touched off. Here I believe Freud's second explanation of Haizmann's case, relating his incapacity to start life afresh to problems in his relationship with his mother, offers a more promising way forward in understanding how an entire society could become willing to persecute witches.

Elsewhere, using the work of Melanie Klein, who greatly developed Freud's work on the maternal relationship, I have examined how conflicts connected to very primitive fantasies about feeding and related to the psychology of envy fueled the witch craze.³⁹ Here, a collective fantasy really did issue in what I would term a collective psychosis, as an entire society became convinced that it faced the assaults of powerful women in league with the Devil. By 1680, this fantasy was beginning to lose some of its credibility. The European witch hunt still had three generations to run, but the age of mass panics was past. That is why the cases of Karg and Haizmann, and dozens like them, appear so idiosyncratic: these are not normal witches, but individuals with remarkable psychological creativity who bent the standard narrative about the Devil into a shape that could express their own individual unhappiness.

By the late seventeenth century, the authorities knew how to get such rich confessions out of people using torture only as their final resort, and the cases they dealt with were rare enough for them to have the secretarial manpower to capture every nuance of the life histories that individuals like Karg related, even down to their facial expressions and physical comportment. And their cases are recorded at such inordinate length because the legal system and the church alike, in the period of the first stirrings of the Enlightenment, were beginning to become absorbed with questions of individual motivation, psychology, dreams, and sexual identity. This is why clerics like Christoph Ehinger and the priests at Mariazell were so drawn to these characters, and felt compelled to write what were effectively their biographies. The possessed cobbler, the unhappy tailor, the demoniac who wandered southern Germany looking for deliverance — all of them found authors who told their stories. Karg tried and ultimately failed to control his story by writing it himself. The Council did not pursue the young men in Ingolstadt who, he claimed, had seduced him into service with the Devil,⁴⁰ and though he managed to recite his tale as a full, uninterrupted narrative a further three times when he was questioned, he failed to channel the questioning along the

lines he had tried so hard to construct. But he did provide a huge amount of detail about himself and the course of his life up to and since his arrival in Augsburg. The sheer detail and psychological richness of the record is also, of course, what made Haizmann irresistible to Freud. But the issues such cases raised about motivation and character had first been explored in a religious framework, in which the Devil and ideas of good and evil structured the discussion. With the Enlightenment, these discussions would gradually move beyond this grid altogether.

Notes

ABBREVIATIONS

SAS	Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen
SAW	Staatsarchiv Würzburg
StadtAA	Stadtarchiv Augsburg
Urg.	Urgichtensammlung

INTRODUCTION

[1.](#) Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London, 2004).

[2.](#) On images of witchcraft, see, in particular, Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 2007); Linda C. Hults, *The Witch as Muse: Art, Gender, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia, 2005); Claudia Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629)* (Cambridge, 2005); and Jane P. Davidson, *The Witch in Northern European Art, 1470–1750* (Fribourg, 1987).

[3.](#) On the importance of fantasy and its role in depictions of witchcraft, see Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland*.

[4.](#) For some important reflections on this issue, see Griselda Pollock, “The Image in Psychoanalysis and the Archaeological Metaphor,” in *Psychoanalysis and the Image*, ed. Pollock (Oxford, 2006).

[5.](#) See Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (London, 2001), 34–46.

[6.](#) Storm clouds issue from the chalice, implying that the Devil is helping her to raise storms.

[7.](#) Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997).

[8.](#) Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 2007).

[9.](#) See also Patricia Simons, “Italian Classicism: Eroticism and Envy,” forthcoming.

[10.](#) See, for Italy, Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400–1600* (New Haven and London, 2005).

[11.](#) Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *The Northern Renaissance* (London, 2004), 242.

[12.](#) *Bettlade mit Selbstporträt*, 1533, in Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, rev. and ed. Walter Strauss, 4 vols. (New York, 1974), 3:803.

- [13](#). Another features a skull (*Bettlade mit Totenkopfwappen*), while others feature triumphant putti and extravagant decoration (Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut*, rev. and ed. Strauss, 3:804, 805, 806).
- [14](#). Cranach's workshop provided the paintings for the marital bed of John the Steadfast and Margaret of Anhalt. (Mark Evans, " 'The Italians, Who Usually Pursue Fame, Proffer Their Hand to You': Lucas Cranach and the Art of Humanism," in *Cranach*, ed. Bodo Brinkmann [London, 2008], 53). On gingerbread molds and a variety of objects produced by the Cranach workshop, see Gunnar Heydenreich, *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Painting Materials, Techniques and Workshop Practice* (Amsterdam, 2007), 269.
- [15](#). Francesco de Rossi, called Salviati, *Design for a Ewer*, in *Old Master Drawings from the Ashmolean Museum*, by Christopher White, Catherine Whistler, and Colin Harrison (Oxford, 1992), 60 (fig. 19). He also, however, made designs for real ewers.
- [16](#). See Staatsarchiv Weimar, EGA Reg. Bb, 5942–5952, Kleiderrechnungen, e.g., 5949, Rechnung for 1531, fol. 8, under Wittenberg, "luckas Maller zu Wittenbergk." On Cranach's *David and Bathsheba*, see Brinkmann, *Cranach*, 300. On clothing, see Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 2010).
- [17](#). On de Gheyn, see Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland*; and Linda C. Hults, *The Witch as Muse*, 145–75. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Beschwörungsszene der Hexen bei Vollmond," 1776–79. See Sabine Schulze, ed., *Goethe und die Kunst* (Stuttgart, 1994), 126.
- [18](#). Joseph Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (London, 1990).
- [19](#). Clifford Geertz, "Art as a Cultural System," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, by Geertz (1983; New York, 2000), 99.
- [20](#). Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (1972; Oxford, 1988), 38–39; see also esp. 77–103.
- [21](#). Clifford James Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Culture*, by Geertz (New York, 1973).
- [22](#). See the powerful critique by Mark Salber Phillips, "Distance and Historical Representation," in *History Workshop Journal* 57 (2004): 123–41.
- [23](#). Joseph Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago, 1993), esp. 441; see also Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 32–36.
- [24](#). Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 99–109. These images are based on the idea of the Wild Ride, and Zika argues that they reflect gender inversion.
- [25](#). See, on this image and on the case itself, Jörg Haustein, *Martin Luthers Stellung zum Zauberund Hexenwesen*, Münchener Kirchenhistorische Studien 2 (Stuttgart, Berlin, and Cologne, 1990), 141–44, 187.
- [26](#). David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989).
- [27](#). See Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 125–55.
- [28](#). Albrecht Altdorfer, *Lot and His Daughter*, 1537, Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums Vienna, Inv. Nr. 6391; Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Venus und Amor*, 1509, Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Werner Schade, *Lucas Cranach. Glaube*,

Mythologie und Moderne, catalogue for exhibition at Statens Museum of Art, Copenhagen, 2002 (Ostfildern, 2003), 67, 178.

[29](#). See Margaret R. Miles, *A Complex Delight: The Secularization of the Breast, 1350–1750* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 2008).

[30](#). Charles Zika, “Fears of Flying: Representations of Witchcraft and Sexuality in Early Sixteenth-Century Germany,” in *Exorcising Our Demons: Magic, Witchcraft and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, by Zika, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 91 (Leiden and Boston, 2003).

[31](#). I am grateful to Deanna Petherbridge for this point.

[32](#). Dieter Koeplin, “Ausgeführte und entworfene Hausfassadenmalereien von Holbein, Stimmer und Bock — Kunsthybris mit dem erhobenen Zeigefinger,” in *Spätrenaissance am Oberrhein. Tobias Stimmer 1539–1584*, exhibition catalogue from Kunstmuseum Basel (Basel, 1984), 40–46.

[33](#). Gareth Roberts, *The Languages of Alchemy* (London, 1997).

[34](#). Germanisches Nationalmuseum, *Rosenkranztafel* from the Nürnberger Frauenkirche, ca. 1518–19, Inv. Nr. Pl.O.229, Workshop of Veit Stoss.

[35](#). See Jacques Thuillier and Jacques Foucart, eds., *Rubens’ Life of Marie de Medici*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (New York, 1967), esp. 85–86, 88–89ff.; see also plates.

[36](#). There are at least three witchlike figures in the cycle. In *The Felicity of the Regency*, completed in 1625 and the last of the images, the queen vanquishes Envy, Ignorance, and Vice — Envy’s sagging breast is visible at the bottom of the image below her outstretched arm; while in *The Queen Opts for Security*, a hag is one of the representations of Evil that the figure of the queen keeps at bay.

[37](#). Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London, 1992).

[38](#). Ibid., 49–54.

[39](#). Ibid., 158.

[40](#). On paganism and witchcraft, see the following works by Ronald Hutton: *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1994); *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996); and *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford, 1999).

[41](#). Sebastian Franck, *Weltbuch: Spiegel und Bildtnisz des gantzten Erdtbodens* (Tübingen, 1534).

1. WITCHCRAFT AND THE WESTERN IMAGINATION

[1](#). “On y voit de grandes chaudieres pleines de crapaux et impres, coeurs d’infants non baptisez, chair de pendus, & autres horribles charognes, & des eaux puantes, pots de graisse et de poison, qui se preste & se debite a cette foire, comme estant las plus precieuse & commune marchandise qui s’y trouve” (Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l’inconstance des mauvais anges et démons*, 2nd ed. [Paris, 1613]; Ziarnko’s image faces p. 118). For a brilliant discussion of the text, see Margaret M. McGowan, “Pierre de Lancre’s *Tableau de l’inconstance des mauvais anges et démons*: The Sabbat Sensationalised,” in *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of*

Witchcraft, ed. Sidney Anglo (1977); and see now the excellent translation, Gerhild Scholz Williams, ed. and trans., *On the Inconstancy of Witches: Pierre de Lancre's "Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons" (1612)*, *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* 307 (Tempe, Ariz., 2006).

2. Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance et instabilité de toutes choses* (1607; 2nd ed., Paris, 1610); Pierre de Lancre, *L'incrédulité et mescreance du sortilege plainement conuaincue* (Paris, 1622). The confessions on the other side of the Spanish border in the same panic were also very elaborate (see Gustav Henningsen, *The Salazar Documents: Inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frias and Others on the Basque Witch Persecution* [Leiden, 2004]; Gustav Henningsen, *The Witches' Advocate: Basque Witchcraft and the Spanish Inquisition [1609–1614]* [Reno, 1980]; and Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, trans. Nigel Glendinning [London, 1964]).

3. Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997).

4. Early on in the work, he considers why it is that a man can walk along a narrow beam when it is stretched across the street, but cannot do so if it is suspended over deep water: "because his imagination would most strongly impress upon his mind the idea of falling" (Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger, *The Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. and ed. Rev. Montague Summers [1928; New York, 1971; hereafter cited as *Malleus*] 13, pt. 1, qu. 2). There is a long passage on fascination, the gaze, and perception. The discussion of the imagination is on p. 50, pt. 1, qu. 7. Since this chapter was first published, a new authoritative English translation and edition of the *Malleus* has appeared: Christopher S. Mackay, ed. and trans., *Malleus Maleficarum*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2006).

5. Jean Bodin, *Vom Außgelaßnen Wütigen Teuffels heer Allerhand Zauberern / Hexen vnd Hexenmeistern / Vnholden / Teuffelsbeschwerern / Warsagern ...*, trans. Johann Fischart (Strasbourg, 1581) (other editions are known from 1586 and 1591). The French original appeared at Paris in 1580 as *De la démonomanie des sorciers*. Francois Rabelais, *Affenteurliche und Ungeheuerliche Geschichtschrift von ... Herrn Grandgusier, Gargantua und Pantagruel*, trans. Johann Fischart (Strasbourg, 1575). See Stefan Janson, *Jean Bodin, Johann Fischart: De la démonomanie des sorciers (1580), Vom ausgelassenen wütigen Teuffelsheer (1581) und ihre Fallberichte*, *Europäische Hochschulschriften* 352 (Frankfurt am Main, 1980).

6. Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, trans. and abridged Randy Scott (Toronto, 1995), 59–62, bk. 1, chap. 2. See, on this passage, Robin Briggs, "Dubious Messengers: Bodin's Daemon, the Spirit World, and the Sadducees," in *Angels in the Early Modern World*, ed. Peter Marshall and Alex Walsham (Cambridge, 2006).

7. Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fols. 7r–14v; Bodin, *Vom Außgelaßnen*, 61–82, bk. 1, chap. 2 (dreams); Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fols. 58r–9v (codpiece); Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fols. 94v–104r; Bodin, *Vom Außgelaßnen*, 343–64, bk. 2, chap. 6 (lycanthropy); Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fols. 123v–127v; Bodin, *Vom Außgelaßnen*, 426–30, bk. 3, chap. 1 (alms).

8. Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fol. 162r–v; Bodin, *Vom Außgelaßnen*, 537–38; translation from Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, 169, bk. 3, chap. 6. Bodin continues to elaborate on this theme; some of his material comes from Weyer. Boguet recycles these stories about dogs, though in brief (Henry Boguet [sic], *An*

Examen of Witches [French, 1590], trans. E. A. Ashwin, ed. Rev. Montague Summers [London, 1929]).

9. Johann Fischart, *Flöh Hatz, Weiber Tratz*, ed. Alois Haas (1967; Stuttgart, 1982).

10. See, for example, Sydney Anglo, “Evident Authority and Authoritative Evidence: The *Malleus Maleficarum*,” in *The Damned Art*, ed. Anglo (1977).

11. *Malleus*, 116–17, pt. 2, qu. 1, chap. 6. On Kramer, and on his role as sole author, see, in particular, the indispensable introduction, text, and notes of *Der Hexenhammer*, ed. Wolfgang Behringer and Günter Jerouschek; trans. Behringer, Jerouschek, and Werner Tschacher (Munich, 2000); Eric Wilson, “Institoris at Innsbruck: Heinrich Institoris, the *Summis Desiderantes* and the Brixen Witch-Trial of 1485,” in *Popular Religion in Germany and Central Europe, 1400–1800*, ed. Bob Scribner and Trevor Johnson (Houndmills, Basingstoke, and London, 1996); Anglo, “Evident Authority and Authoritative Evidence”; P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Witchcraft in Europe and the New World, 1400–1800* (Basingstoke, 2001); Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago and London, 2002); and Hans Peter Broedel, *The Malleus Maleficarum and the Construction of Witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief* (Manchester, 2003).

12. Euan Cameron, “For Reasoned Faith or Embattled Creed? Religion for the People in Early Modern Europe,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, ser. 6, 8 (1998): 165–84; plagiarism of Lutheran Gödelmann’s attack on Paracelsus by Del Rio, 170, bk 6. Evidently, Del Rio also knew the demonology of the Calvinist Daneau well enough to set him and Gödelmann right on points of detail (Martin Del Rio, *Investigations into Magic*, ed. and trans. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart [Manchester, 2000], 135, 213; example taken from Luther, 44).

13. The market for the *Malleus* was partly among those who had enjoyed a classical education and who read for pleasure — the *Malleus* itself was not translated into German. It was aimed at the upper end of the popular vernacular market, often published in large format. The other classics of demonology were mostly translated into German and went through several editions, as their printing histories show: Lambert Daneau’s *De veneficis* was published in Cologne in 1575 and 1597 with a German version appearing in Frankfurt and Cologne in 1576 (VD16: D77–80); Grillando’s *De sortilegiis* appeared in Latin in 1592 in Frankfurt (VD16: G3344); Jean Bodin’s was printed in a Latin translation at Basel in 1581, with Fischart’s German translation printed in Strasbourg in 1581, 1586, and 1591; and in 1592 in Frankfurt (*Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachbereich erschienenen Drucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (25 vols., Stuttgart, 1983–2000) (VD16: B6266–72). Rémy’s *Demonolatriy* was published in Lyon in 1595 in Latin and issued in the following year at Cologne and Frankfurt; a German translation appeared in Frankfurt in 1598 as *Daemonolatria: Das ist von Unholden und Zaubergeistern ...* (VD16: R1090, R1091, R1092, R1093) and was extremely influential in the Holy Roman Empire, possibly even more so than the *Malleus* (Schulte, *Hexenmeister*, 141–43). Peter Binsfeld’s *Tractat von Bekantnuß der Zauberer und Hexen* appeared in German in 1590 (VD16, nos. B5531, B5532); Johannes Georg Gödelmann’s Latin work of 1591 appeared in German as *Von Zaubern Hexen und Unholden*, translated by Georg Nigrinus at Frankfurt in 1592 (VD16: G2486, G2488); James IV’s *Daemonologia* was published

in Latin in Hanau in 1604; Martin Del Rio's *Disquisitionum magicarum libri sex* was reprinted in numerous editions in Cologne and Mainz; Pierre de Lancre's work appeared in German in 1630 as *Wunderbahrliche Geheimnußen der Zauberey ...* (s.l.) (VD17 12:640907L; there was another edition of the same year, VD17 23: 238328W). Boguet's *Discours des sorciers* was published in at least three editions at Lyons; I have found no records of a German publication of it or of Guazzo's *Compendium* (though copies of Boguet's *Discours des sorciers* and of his *Discours execrable des sorciers* [Rouen, 1603] exist in German libraries); Guazzo's treatise was published in 1608 in Milan and republished there in an extended edition in 1626.

[14.](#) See Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London, 2004), 98–104.

[15.](#) Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum* (Milan, 1608), 106 (man and woman roast child); 149 (cutting up bodies of criminals). Many of the woodcuts are reused, some several times (see, for example, 26, 43, 107, 109).

[16.](#) *Malleus*, 140, pt. 2, qu. 1, chap. 13; 66, pt. 1, qu. 12.

[17.](#) Nicolas Rémy, *Demonolatriy*, ed. and trans. Montague Summers (London, 1930), 100, bk. 2, chap. 3; on the Hand of Glory, see, for example, A. Roger Ekirch, *At Day's Close* (London, 2005), 41–42. Hands of executed criminals were used as candles by thieves to ensure that the household slept while they engaged in robbery.

[18.](#) Rémy, *Demonolatriy*, 103, bk. 2, chap. 3.

[19.](#) *Malleus*, 155–64, pt. 2, qu. 2.

[20.](#) Gareth Roberts, *The Languages of Alchemy* (London, 1997).

[21.](#) Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fol. 88v; Bodin, *Vom Außgelaßnen*, 308; Rémy, *Demonolatriy*, 63.

[22.](#) On the genre of the Devil books and moralism, see Lyndal Roper, “Drinking, Whoring and Gorging,” in *Oedipus and the Devil*, by Roper (1984).

[23.](#) Abraham Saur, *Theatrum de veneficis* (Frankfurt am Main, 1586); Nicolaus Basse, *Theatrum diabolorum* (Frankfurt, 1569), Sigmund Feyerabend (VD16: F904). On the publishing history of these books and the allegations of piracy which surrounded them, see Frank Baron, *Faustus on Trial: The Origins of Johann Spies's “Historia” in an Age of Witch Hunting* (Tübingen, 1992), esp. 69ff. The title page and foreword of *Theatrum de veneficis* have it both ways: Basse's carefully judged preface opens with a conventional attack on *Zauberer* and is no call to take up arms against the persecution of witches (fols. ii r–iii v); but there is a prominent motto at the start, “Richtet recht ihr Menschen Kinder” from Psalm 57, which is, in context, a barely coded warning to judges that many executions for witchcraft were unjust.

[24.](#) Basse clearly had developed a niche market in printing works of demonology for he had published a German version of Daneaus's treatise on witchcraft, together with Molitor's work (which also stresses the role of illusion in witchcraft), in 1576 (VD16: D80); the German translation of Bodin in 1592 (VD16: B6272); a selection of witchcraft treatises in Latin including the *Malleus* in 1580 (VD16: M8383); and would publish Johannes Georg Gödelmann's *Von Zauberern Hexen und Unholden* in 1592 (VD16: G2488).

[25.](#) Abraham Saur, “Eine kurtze / trewe Warnung ...,” in *Theatrum*, by Saur, 209–10.

[26](#). Lercheimer, “Ein Christlich Bedencken,” in *Theatrum*, by Saur, 279. Lercheimer’s passage on the magic coat is in a section mixed up with stories about Faust, so the borrowing was suggested by the context.

[27](#). *Historia von D. Johann Fausten: Text des Druckes von 1587: Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Stephan Füßel and Hans Joachim Kreutzer (Stuttgart, 1988), 60–70.

[28](#). Ibid., 60; see also 197.

[29](#). Boguet, *An Examen of Witches* (1929), 34; Bodin, *Démonomanie*.

[30](#). The tract by Reinhard Lutz in the volume also contains lengthy descriptions of witches burned at Schlettstadt, together with trial material (1–11); so also does Abraham Saur’s treatise.

[31](#). Lambert Daneau, *A Dialogue of Witches*, translation attributed to T. Twyne ([London], printed by [T. East? for] R. W[atkins], 1575); for German editions, see VD16: D77–80; George Gifford, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes* (London, 1593).

[32](#). E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford 1923), 3:424, undated report. I am grateful to David Harley for this reference. See also Jonathan Barry, “Hell upon Earth or the Language of the Playhouse,” in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*, ed. Stuart Clark (Basingstoke, 2001), for the Rev. Arthur Bedford’s attempt to rid the theater of reference to devils. He clearly believed such mentions were dangerous, though his campaign and indefatigable recording of such instances also prove they were common currency.

[33](#). Stadtarchiv Augsburg, Urgichten, Johann Mattheus Lutzenberger 1661; Strafbuch des Rats 1654–99, 136, 22 March 1661.

[34](#). *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays*, ed. Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (Manchester, 1986).

[35](#). Anna Bayman, “ ‘Large Hands, Wide Eares, and Piercing Sights’: The ‘Discoveries’ of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Witch Pamphlets,” *Literature and History* 16 (2007): 26–45.

[36](#). *Malleus*, 121, pt. 2, qu. 1, chap. 7.

[37](#). *Deutsche Schwänke*, ed. Leander Petzoldt (Stuttgart, 1979), 190, from *Georg Widmanns Chronica*, ed. Christian Kolb, *Geschichtsquellen der Stadt Hall* 2 (Stuttgart, 1904), 91.

[38](#). Collections of stories featuring fools and peasants had long been popular — there were *Dil Ullenspiegel* (1515), *Claus Narr* (1572), *Das Lalebuch* (1597). In Wolfgang Büttner’s *Sechs hundert / neben vnd zwentzig Historien / Von Claus Narren* (Eisleben, 1572), someone tries to match-make Claus with a rich, ugly old woman. Claus retorts that if she is ugly, the Devil should have her, for when he is sick of her he will surely find another poor devil to pass her off onto (fol. L3r–v): apart from this misogynist tale, the Devil features little. There were also the Alsatian Martin Montanus’s many collections, including such classics as his *Gartengesellschaft* of 1559 (Martin Montanus, *Schwankbücher*, ed. Johannes Bolte, Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins Stuttgart 217 [Stuttgart, 1899]). In one of these, a widow marries a man who promises her he will keep her well and she will have no need to work; but this dream lover turns out to be an oversexed devil, who “rides her to death” (chap. 85). Some of the motifs of Montanus’s stories echo fairy tales, but on

the whole, witchcraft does not feature much.

[39.](#) *Historia von D. Fausten*, 86–87.

[40.](#) *Ibid.*, 118–24.

[41.](#) *Hundstägige Erquickstunden: Das ist / Schöne / Lustige Moralishe und Historische Discursß vnd Abbildungen* (Frankfurt, 1650). The title page makes it explicit that the aim of the collection is to drive away “Das schwäre Gemüht der Menschen zu erfrischen / die Melancoleyen zu vertreiben”—a nice irony, since it was widely held by those who took witchcraft seriously that melancholy might lead one to fall into the clutches of the Devil and incline one to witchcraft. The twelfth chapter (427–574) has an extensive section on witches that eventually moves on to hermaphrodites. See, on *Hundstägige Erquickstunden* (which is a translation of Simon Maiolus’s *Dies caniculares*), Gerhild Scholz Williams, “Demonology and Topography: Locating Giants and Witches,” in *Ways of Knowing in Early Modern Germany: Johannes Praetorius as a Witness to His Time*, by Scholz Williams (Aldershot, 2006).

[42.](#) Johann Praetorius (Hans Schultze), *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* (Leipzig: Johann Schieber; Frankfurt: Friedrich Arnst, 1668): see 291ff. on Africa; 313–71 for the famous passage on flight and the sabbath from which Faust drew. See the modern reprint, *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*, introduction by Hans Henning (Leipzig, 1968). Praetorius also makes great use of the Devil books, as do Bodin, Meder, Gödelmann, Rémy, Binsfeld, and Grillando. The book is sprinkled with games and acrostics, many sections spelling out BLOCKSBERG and so on. Praetorius made his living through writing and was very prolific. Much of his books consist in reprinting the works of others; the *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* is a miscellany that even contains a treatise in Latin. See also Scholz Williams, “Demonology and Topography.”

[43.](#) Praetorius, *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*, “Die zauberkundige Witwe und ihr Hausknecht,” which is similar to Del Rio, *Investigations*, 95–97. On the Baldung Grien image, see, for an interpretation linking the image to fantasy and to sleep, Linda C. Hults, “Baldung’s *Bewitched Groom* Revisited: Artistic Temperament, Fantasy and the ‘Dream of Reason,’ ” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 3 (1984): 259–79.

[44.](#) Johannes Praetorius, *Daemonologia Rubinzalii* (Frankfurt, 1661), which even reproduces the story about Faust and the horse seller, but replaces Faust with his hero Rübenzal (329), and includes plenty of material about ghosts, Silesian legends, and superstition. Praetorius, as someone who lived from his writing, had to have an eye for what would sell. On Rübenzal, see also Scholz Williams, “Demonology and Topography.”

[45.](#) See, on such images in Reformation antimonastic propaganda, R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981; rev. ed., Oxford, 1994), 85–87.

[46.](#) Interestingly enough, the publishers of a work by Gottlieb Spitzel in 1687 included an engraving that was based on a re-hash of Praetorius’s frontispiece combined with an image by the Augsburg artist Melchior Küsel from an illustrated Bible of the *Witch of Endor* (Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß / oder Zerstörte Teuflische Bunds-und Buhl-Freundschaft mit den menschen ...* (Augsburg, 1687), 207, but in a work that was a serious contribution to demonology. On this image and its complex history, some of whose elements go

back to the left-hand side of Michael Heer and Matthäus Merian the Elder's sabbath scene, see Charles Zika, "Picturing Witchcraft in the Later Seventeenth Century," in *A Sourcebook of Early Modern History: In Honor of Susan C. Karant-Nunn on her 70th Birthday*, ed. Ute Lotz-Heumann (Tucson, Ariz., 2011). Spitzel did believe that some of witchcraft was illusion, though he was convinced the Devil was active in the world and that witchcraft was real.

[47](#). Praetorius, *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung*, introduction, fols. ii r–xiv r.

[48](#). Eberhard Happel, *Größte Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt, oder sogenannte Relationes curiosae*, 5 vols. (Hamburg, 1683–90), vol. 2, pt. 2, 140–41.

[49](#). Ibid., 3:472 ("Teuflische Post"); this section contains such stories as "Zauberische Liebe," "Verfluchte Chrystall-sehen," and "Teuffliche Bocksfahrt."

[50](#). See, for example, the works of Jean Bodin, Nicolaus Rémy, and others, published in a multipart series entitled *Beschreibung Teuffelischer Zauberund Hexen-Poßen; Der bösen Geister und Gespensten Wunder-seltzahme Historien und Nächtliche Erscheinungen; Der Gespensten Gauckel-Wercks Dritter Theil* (1693; Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Leipzig, 1698).

[51](#). Hans Jakob Christoph von Grimmelshausen, *Lebensbeschreibung der Erzbetrügerin und Landstörzerin Courasche*, ed. Klaus Haberkamm and Günther Weydt (Stuttgart, 1971), 85–90 (chap. 17).

[52](#). See Heiko Oberman, "Teufelsdreck: Eschatology and Scatology in the 'Old' Luther," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 3 (1988): 435–50.

[53](#). Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition, and Society (c. 1520–c. 1630)," in *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and G. Henningsen (Oxford, 1990).

[54](#). Peter Binsfeld, *Tractat von Bekanntnuß der Zauberer und Hexen* (Trier, 1590), 60. He thinks this proves flight is real, but concedes that some call flight dreams. Del Rio also mentions those who have the bad luck to get arrested without any clothes on, or simply fall from the sky (Del Rio, *Investigations*, 97, qu. 16).

2. THE GORGON OF AUGSBURG

[1](#). "hat ir ain frauenzimmer gehalten wie ainer fürstin" (*Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte von 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert*, vol. 23, Augsburg 4 [Leipzig, 1894], 35).

[2](#). "hat der hencker ein lange stang genomen und um der Agnesen har gewickelt, dann sie gar ain schoens, langs har hat gehept" (ibid.).

[3](#). Sender says, "also daß man sagt, der Herzog hatte sie zu der ee genommen und die ee versprochen, aber doch nicht zur Kirche gefiert" (ibid.). He is careful to say that "one says," but he is clear that it was believed to be a binding, secret marriage. Schäfer speculates it was a morganatic marriage (Walter Schäfer, *Agnes Bernauer und ihre Zeit* [Munich, 1987], 105–34; and Werner Schäfer and Erwin Böhm, *Agnes Bernauer. Geschichte, Dichtung, Bild* [Straubing, 1995], 37–38). On the status of Augsburg's bath keepers, who were considered honorable in Augsburg (though in many areas they were not), see Kathy Stuart, *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts: Honor and Ritual Pollution in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1999),

4. The humanist chronicler Achilles Pirmin Gasser gives a brief account of the story and states that she was known by the people as “Angela” (Johann Burkhard Mencke, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, praecipue Saxonicarum*, vol. 1 [Leipzig, 1728], column 1589). Johannes Frank calls her “Engel” (*Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 25, Augsburg 5 [Leipzig, 1896], 295); see also Alfons Huber, *Agnes Bernauer. Ein Quellen-und Lesebuch* (Straubing, 1999), 80.

5. The song is mentioned by Suthemius and by Bruschi, writing in the sixteenth century (see Werner Schäfer and Erwin Böhm, *Agnes Bernauer. Geschichte, Dichtung, Bild* [Straubing, 1995], 99). The version that has come down to us was first recorded in the eighteenth century. For Sachs’s version, see Schäfer and Böhm, *Agnes Bernauer*, 104.

6. See Schäfer, *Agnes Bernauer und ihre Zeit*; and Schäfer and Böhm, *Agnes Bernauer*. Bernauer’s tale became the stuff of countless dramas, and among the most famous are versions of her story by the dramatist Friedrich Hebbel (first performed 1852) and a music drama by Carl Orff (first performed 1947). Her story remains an inspiration for artists, and there is even a recent historical novel by Manfred Böckl, *Agnes Bernauer. Hexe, Hure, Herzogin* (Berlin, 1996). On executioners and honor, see, in particular, Stuart, *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts*.

7. The anonymous chronicle “Chronik von der Gründung der Stadt bis 1469,” *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 5, Augsburg 2, 322, gives an extremely brief rendition of the story, stating that Agnes was executed because “die hett herzog Albrecht an im,” that is, she was his mistress. See also the anonymous chronicle from 991 to 1483, *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 22, Augsburg 3, 484, which stresses that she was “unsers burgers dochter” and that Herzog Ernst was responsible.

8. “dan sie wolt mit gwalt ein hertzogin sein zu Bayrn. Und [da] sie sach, das sie sterben müst, da begeret sie in ein closter, das halff alles nit, sonder man warffs in ein wasser” (*Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 22, Augsburg 3 [Leipzig, 1892], 348 n. 2).

9. On love magic, see Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550–1650* (Oxford and New York, 1989); Guido Ruggiero, “That Old Black Magic Called Love,” in *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (Oxford and New York, 1993); and Mary Wack, *Love-sickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia, 1990).

10. Schäfer, *Agnes Bernauer und ihre Zeit*, 194–236. The justification for the drowning to Emperor Sigismund states that Albrecht was “beladen mit einem poesn weyb.” “Poeses weib,” as Schäfer correctly points out, is the contemporary expression for witch (213). It continues that therefore Duke Ernst feared for Albrecht’s life; that she never made his son properly happy in three or four years (“in drein oder vier jarn nie recht frölich”), that is, she made Albrecht suffer from melancholy; and that Duke Ernst had reliable information that she planned to poison both himself and Duke Wilhelm’s son Adolf, born in January 1434 (222): infants were classic targets of witchcraft. For the text, see Huber, *Agnes Bernauer*, 28–32. Opinions on Agnes continued to diverge sharply through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: those sympathetic to the Bavarian cause condemned her,

stressing the danger of passionate love and the need to marry according to status. Those who took Agnes's side took care to mention the failed execution — itself a sign of divine displeasure — and the issue of the disputed marriage. Johannes Trithemius's influential account of 1514 is vigorously anti-Bavarian, presenting the episode as an example of a deed unworthy of a Christian prince (see Huber, *Agnes Bernauer*, 70–72). Augsburg's own chroniclers were divided: Gasser (1572) cites the popular view of Agnes but distances himself; the anonymous chronicle from the founding of the city to 1469 ("Chronik von der Gründung der Stadt bis 1469"), in *Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, Augsburg 2, is not especially sympathetic; the fifteenth-century chronicle of the Benedictine Johannes Frank mentions the event, giving the wrong date and naming her "Engel": the mention is brief but blames Herzog Albrecht's father for the drowning (*Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 25, Augsburg 5 [Leipzig, 1896], 295. Hektor Müllich's fifteenth-century chronicle also gives a short account (*Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, vol. 22, Augsburg 3 [Leipzig, 1892], 348 and n. 2), stating that "many people" thought he had married her. Stetten's authoritative eighteenth-century chronicle carefully avoids judgment but follows his brief account of Agnes's affair and death with a note on how prostitutes were forbidden to wear fine clothes or have servants, a positioning that may or may not be accidental (Paul von Stetten, *Geschichte der Heiligen Römischen Reichsstadt Augsburg*, 2 vols. [1743; Augsburg, 1758], 1:161).

[11](#). Ulinka Rublack, "Wench and Maiden: Women, War and the Pictorial Function of the Feminine in German Cities in the Early Modern Period," *History Workshop Journal* 44 (1977): 1–21.

[12](#). See Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (London, 1981); and Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, 1990).

[13](#). See Lyndal Roper, "The Common Man, the Common Good, the Common Woman: Gender and Meaning in the German Reformation Commune," *Social History* (January 1987): 1–22; Merry Wiesner, *Gender, Church and State in Early Modern Germany: Essays by Merry E. Wiesner* (London, 1993).

[14](#). See "Chronik von der Gründung der Stadt bis 1469," in *Chroniken der deutschen Städte*, Augsburg 2, 280. The scene of the Amazon attack is also depicted in the Müllich chronicle (Dieter Weber, *Geschichtsschreibung in Augsburg: Hektor Müllich und die reichsstädtische Chronistik des Spätmittelalters* [Augsburg, 1984], see figs. 77 and 106).

[15](#). "etliche wilde bosshaffte Weiber (deren vnserer Zeit noch viel allda gefunden wereden)" (Marcus Welser, *Chronica. Der Weitberüempten Keyserlichen Freyen vnd dess H. Reichss Statt Augsburg in Schwaben / Von derselben altem Vrsprung ...*, trans. and ed. Engelbert Werlich (Augsburg, 1595), 3: this is an extract from Gasser. Welser is scornful of this and other tales, dismissing the idea that "all Vindelica was under the power of women" ("ganz Vindelica vnder der Weiber gewalt gewesen") as a poetic fable (14).

[16](#). "Das Weyb auff einer magern Gurren / So jm entgegen kompt mit schnurrn / On Sattel / Zaum / schlecht kleydet war / Halb Bloss / vnd mit fliegendem Haar. / Mit aussgestreckt Armen / mager / Alt / Fast wie in einer Hexin gestalt" (Bernhard Heupold, *Gründliche und ordentliche Beschreibung der Gemähl an den drey*

Thürmen ..., [Augsburg, 1610], cited in *Augsburger Stadtsagen [Schwaben, Landes-und Volkskultur]*, [Augsburg 1985], 52–53). I have used the edition of 1613; for the text, fol. L iii v. Heupold composed the text in German, and it was translated into Latin by Georg Faber; the 1613 edition is a parallel text. Heupold, praeceptor at St. Anna's school, clearly wanted to educate Augsburgers in local history and celebrate the work of the artists Karg and Freyberger. For a different Latin and a German version of this rhyme, taken from Stridtbeck's *De sagis*, see Eberhard David Hauber, *Biblioteca. Acta et scripta magica*, 3 vols. (Lemgo, 1735–41; 2nd ed., 1739), 1:563–64. There is also a poem by Alexander Schöppner in his collected *Sagenbuch der bayerischen Lande* of 1825, which describes her explicitly as a witch and mentions her naked body and snake-hair (see the online Project Gutenberg).

17. The Latin lettering: ATTILAM. ANNO. CDLIV. FANATICA. MVLIER. IN. LICL. TRANSITV. CONSTERNAT. TER. HORRENDE. INCLAMANS: RETRO ATILA (Heupold, *Beschreibung*, fol. L i v). The Latin does not describe her as a witch, but the imagery and Heupold's poem make the resemblance clear.

18. See Bernhard Heupold, *Gründliche und ordentliche Beschreibung der Gemähl an den drey Thürmen ...* (Augsburg, 1610), cited in *Augsburger Stadtsagen (Schwaben, Landes-und Volkskultur)* (Augsburg, 1985), 52. I have used the edition of 1613. Heupold's poems celebrate the themes of the pictures on the three city gates as painted by Karg and Freyberger. The image of Attila and the witch was on the outside of the gate facing the Schmidgasse (Heupold, *Beschreibung*, fol. Kiv v). What is even more remarkable is that the other images concerned, in the main, imperial themes, religious themes, and the story of the famous sixteenth-century Augsburger Matthäus Lang; the Barfüßer Thor program dealt in particular with historical imperial themes on the inside of the gate, and pictures that encapsulated key episodes in Augsburg's history on the outer side of the gate. The image of Attila and the old woman remained on the gates (Eberhard David Hauber, *Biblioteca: Acta et scripta magica*, 3 vols. [Lemgo, 1735–41]; 2nd ed., 1739, prefacing Stück 8, and explained 1:561–62: "An dem Closter der Minnen-Brüder zu Augspurg wird an einem Thurn ein Gemählde gesehen, welches eine Geschichte verstellet, die zu Augsburg durch eine mündliche Erzählung von alten Zeiten hergebracht ist ... dem ATILLA ... [und] eine Frau in fürchterlicher Gestalt und auf einem Pferde reitend." Elias Holl reports that three city gates including the Barfüßer Thor were renewed in the early seventeenth century, and painted with images on all four sides ("an alle 4 seiten zierlich gemahlt") by Hans Freyberger (Christian Meyer, ed., *Die Hauschronik der Familie Holl [1487–1646]* [Munich, 1910], 57). Freyberger was paid the impressive sum of 800 fl. The eighteenth-century engraving by Simon Grimm shows the Barfüßer Thor and clearly indicates that it was ornamented with pictures. However, none of those shown looks like an image of the witch and Attila, though this may be because the image was on the other side of the gate.

19. Dieter Weber, *Geschichtsschreibung in Augsburg. Hektor Müllich und die reichsstädtische Chronistik des Spätmittelalters*, (Augsburg, 1984), see illustration no. 78, and a more elaborate version of this image, illustration no. 107. The opening title page of Hektor Müllich's manuscript chronicle combines all the traditions of the origins of Augsburg, reading "CIZERA. VINDELICA. GENVNIA. AVGVSTA," illustration no. 74. He places the name Cisa first, emphasizing just how important

she was.

[20](#). Gasser, in Welser, *Chronica*, 4, mentions the festival. It has recently been argued that this popular festival was displaced on the initiative of the Catholics, who wanted to replace it with a more orthodox celebration of St. Michael. This is an interesting theory, but it is doubtful whether it eradicated her memory: she stands on the raised Perlach Tower (1615) to this day, and, interestingly, Holl placed the statue of St. Michael, who appears on important occasions in the clock, under her.

[21](#). *Historia von D. Johann Fausten. Text des Druckes von 1587. Kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Stephan Füssel and Hans Joachim Kreutzer (Stuttgart, 1988), 60–70. Stetten also mentions Cysara as being the town's first name (Paul von Stetten, *Geschichte der Heiligen Römischen Reichsstadt Augsburg*, 2 vols. [1743; Augsburg 1758], 1:4).

[22](#). Sender's chronicle states that the head is still visible above the door of St. Ulrich's church (*Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte von 14. bis ins 16. Jahrhundert*, vol. 23, Augsburg 4, 5). A sixteenth-century drawing of the facade of St. Ulrich also clearly shows the Medusa head sculpted into the wall: for a photograph of this image, see Marie-Sophie Seng, "Die Augsburger Stadtgöttin Cisa," *Augsburger Zeiten. Zeitschrift für Stadtkultur* 3 (2005): 4–7, 7. There was clearly some confusion between a Roman Medusa head and the image of Cisa (Wolfram Baer, Josef Bellot et al., eds., *Augsburger Stadtlexikon* [Augsburg, 1985], 71).

[23](#). Sender, in *Die Chroniken*, 5.

[24](#). Welser, *Chronica*, 7–28; Welser, *Antiqua Monumenta / Das ist Alte Bilder / Gemählde / vnnd Schrifften* (Frankfurt, 1595), esp. nos. 3 and 15. Welser systematically downplays the importance of Cisa and denies that, for instance, the Zisenberg in Augsburg, related by tradition to Cisa, had anything to do with her (*Chronica*, 16); and he rejects the story of the army which was attacked while celebrations for Cisa were going on as not referring to Augsburg (*Chronica*, 15).

[25](#). Welser, *Chronica*, 96. Bernauer does not make an appearance.

[26](#). Gasser explicitly linked Cisa with a fertility cult and Piniennuss and represented her as a snake goddess; and this is the passage that is reprinted in Welser's *Chronica* (3–4); he disproves the link between the two (25–26). This was an older tradition and is referred to in a poem by Clemens Jäger of 1545, which states that the town's coat of arms included a "zirbelnuss oder tannenzapfen, der göttlich Cibeles haupt darbei"; and that this could be seen at many points in the city: "die noch an viel ort wird gefunden, die man noch sieht zu diesen stunden, Als sie contrafeiet allhie stat" (Seng, "Die Augsburger Stadtgöttin," 5).

[27](#). Meyer, *Hauschronik*, 66: "habe ich im Namen Gottes das sizend Bild, die Circe genannt, auch hinauf gesteckt"; "war mein höchster Trunk, so ich jemahlen gethan." See also Bernd Roeck, *Elias Holl: Architekt einer europäischen Stadt* (Augsburg, 1985), 185. Roeck points out that he meant Cisa, and speculates that he called her Circe in error, the result of a little humanist education! Stetten in his eighteenth-century work testifies to the ongoing popular belief in the existence of Cisa and mentions her image on the weathervane on top of the Perlach Tower; Stetten himself, however, doubted the veracity of the cult (Paul von Stetten, d.J., *Erläuterungen der in Kupfer gestochenen Vorstellungen, aus der Geschichte der Reichsstadt Augsburg* [Augsburg, 1765], 14–16; Leonhard Bayrer, *Kurzgefasste*

Geschichte von Augsburg. Ein Lesebuch für den Bürger und dessen Abstammlinge [Augsburg, 1785], 37ff., both cited in Günther Kapfhammer, *Augsburger Stadtsagen* [Augsburg, 1985], 37). The weather vane of Circe atop the Perlach Tower can also be clearly made out on the engraving of the new town hall and Perlach Tower by Lucas Kilian of 1619 (see Roeck, *Elias Holl*, 210); it was knocked off its perch during a bombing raid during World War II and finally restored in 1984. I was first alerted to the importance of Cisa in the iconography of Augsburg by a lecture given by the late Dr. Josef Bellot in Augsburg.

[28](#). Weber, *Geschichtsschreibung in Augsburg*. The fifteenth-century illustration (no. 78) depicts her as a voluptuous naked woman with winglike shapes above her head and a snakelike garland entwined about her neck; the other manuscript clearly shows her with wings on her head (107); and Welser's illustrations and description mention wings and snakes. Holl may therefore have been making an understandable mistake when he referred to her as Circe.

[29](#). See Gareth Roberts, *The Languages of Alchemy* (London, 1997).

[30](#). See Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli, ed., *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 10 vols. (Berlin and Leipzig, 1927–42), vol. 2, column 1401–2, “Feuer,” and vol. 4, 733–40, “Johannisfeuer.” Once again, practices designed to promote fruitfulness and celebrate pairing might be linked with witchcraft, for straw witches might be thrown on the fire, and it was believed that after midnight witches would jump over the fire. However, the antiwitch practices are known for the nineteenth century and cannot necessarily be projected backward. See also Eugen Fehrle, *Deutsche Feste und Volksbräuche* (Leipzig, 1916).

[31](#). See, on these images, in particular, Charles Zika, *Exorcising Our Demons: Magic, Witchcraft and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston, 2003); and Joseph Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (New Haven and London, 1999). Witch-hunting had been going on in the bishopric of Strasbourg.

[32](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, 30 April 1590, Caspar Vischer.

[33](#). An exception to this rule is the imperial town of Nördlingen, which saw a major panic between 1589 and 1598 in which thirty-five people died (see Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* [London, 2004]). For the trial in Augsburg in 1625, see Bernd Roeck, *Eine Stadt in Krieg und Frieden. Studien zur Geschichte der Reichsstadt Augsburg zwischen Kalenderstreit und Parität*, 2 vols., Schriftenreihe der historischen Kommission bei der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 37 (Göttingen, 1989), 2:539–53.

[34](#). Barbara Rajkay, “Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung Augsburgs,” in *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg von der Römerzeit bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Günther Gottlieb et al. (Stuttgart, 1984); Etienne Francois, *Die unsichtbare Grenze. Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648–1806* (Augsburg, 1991).

[35](#). Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß / oder Zerstörte Teuflische Bunds-und Buhl-Freundschaft mit den menschen ...* (Augsburg, 1687); Christoph Ehinger, *Daemonologia oder etwas neues vom Teufel* (Augsburg, 1681).

[36](#). See Roper, *Witch Craze*, chaps. 8 and 9.

[37](#). Welser, in *Chronica*, writes that some confused Ceres with Venere; he also notes that Afra served the goddess Veneri with *Unzucht*, that is, she was a prostitute

who served Venus (17, 71). This suggests the interesting possibility that there may have been some confusion between all the female protectors of the town, an idea repeated in Christoph Jakob Wagenseil, *Versuch einer Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg* (Augsburg, 1819), 5.

[38](#). Huber, *Agnes Bernauer*, 84–85.

[39](#). Reproduced *ibid.*, 61.

[40](#). “Was mich itzt trösten kan / ist daß ich nichts verübet / Worauf das strenge Recht das Feuer ausgesetzt” (Hofmann von Hofmannswaldau, “Liebe zwischen Herzog Ungenand und Agnes Bernin,” available online in Project Gutenberg; see also, for a slightly different interpretation, Schäfer and Böhm, *Agnes Bernauer*, 106–14).

[41](#). Leonhard Lenk, *Augsburger Bürgertum im Späthumanismus und Frühbarock 1580–1700*, *Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg* 17 (Augsburg, 1968), 214–15.

[42](#). Eberhard David Hauber, *Biblioteca. Acta et scripta magica*, 3 vols. (Lemgo, 1735–41; 2nd ed., 1739), 1:561. Hauber on the whole accepts that she was not a witch and is skeptical about whether the story is genuine or a modern invention; but the important point here is that it was popularly believed in Augsburg that she was.

[43](#). *Ibid.*, prefacing Stück 8, and explained 561–62.

[44](#). Paul von Stetten, *Geschichte der Heiligen Römischen Reichsstadt Augsburg*, 2 vols. (1743; Augsburg, 1758), 1:22; and on the myth, see 1:25.

[45](#). David Langenmantel, *Histoire des Regiments in ... Augspurg* (Leipzig and Frankfurt, 1725).

[46](#). Spitzel, *Gebrochne Macht*, esp. 367–38. See, on this case, Roper, *Witch Craze*, 192, 309 n. 34.

[47](#). Hauber, *Biblioteca*, 2:348, also has a fold-out of a similar image, illustrating the case of the witches of Mora; he cites the *Relatione historicae* of 1670 from Frankfurt as his source (349–50) and also lists the *Theatrum Europaei* under 1669 and 1670; this is likely to be the original, serious image, but I have not yet been able to trace it. The image, he points out, was also used in Happel’s entertaining *Relatione curiosae* (see Eberhard Happel, *Größte Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt, oder sogenannte Relationes curiosae*, 5 vols. [Hamburg, 1683–90], vol. 2, pt. 2, 140–41).

[48](#). See Karl Arndt, Josef Bellot et al., eds., *Augsburger Barock. Katalog* (Augsburg, 1968), no. 344, Abb. 164; see also Hubert Pee and Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, *Die Gemälde Berlin* (1971), 219; and Hans-Martin Kaulbach, *Deutsche Zeichnungen vom Mittelalter bis zum Barock*, with Heinrich Geissler, *Bestandskatalog* (Staatsgalerie Stuttgart Graphische Sammlung) (Ostfildern, 2007), 26, 276–77. The Ratsconsulent David Thomann was almost certainly a Protestant as he was among the dedicatees of a work by the Lutheran pastor Christoph Ehinger, *Daemonologia* (Augsburg, 1681). This tract dealt with the case of a possessed cobbler, so Thomann was evidently interested in witchcraft and possession (see *Das Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts*, online version, www.vd17.de/).

[49](#). See Arndt et al., *Augsburger Barock*, no. 402, 403, Abb. 187, 188.

[50](#). *Ibid.*, no. 404, Abb. 190: one is Armida, the enchantress, another is Medea,

and the third is an allegorical figure: Jürgen Glaesemer argued the three belong together, dating them to his time in Augsburg.

[51](#). See Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997). For a different view to Clark's on how demonology functioned, see [chapter 1](#) of this volume.

[52](#). See Paul Custer, "Refiguring Jemima: Gender, Work and Politics in Lancashire, 1770–1820," *Past and Present* 195 (2007): 127–58.

3. DÜRER'S EMPTY FRAME

[1](#). See, on the frame, Hans Tietze, "Der Rahmen von Dürers Allerheiligenbild," *Pantheon* 8 (1931): 318–24.

[2](#). Friedrich Winkler, *Die Zeichnungen Albrecht Dürers*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1937), 2:118–19; and see fig. 445; the original is at Chantilly, Musée Condé.

[3](#). Erwin Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Princeton, 1945), 1:125–31; see also Carolyn M. Carty, "Albrecht Dürer's Adoration of the Trinity: A Reinterpretation," *Art Bulletin* 67, no. 1 (March 1985): 146–53.

[4](#). Germanisches Nationalmuseum, *Faszination Meisterwerk. Dürer Rembrandt Riemenschneider* (Nuremberg, 2004), 52–54.

[5](#). Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London, 2007).

[6](#). Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien, Inv. nu. 849–1507.

[7](#). Helmut Puff, "The Death of Orpheus (according to Albrecht Dürer)," in *Dead Lovers: Erotic Bonds and the Study of Premodern Europe*, ed. Basil Dufallo and Peggy McCracken (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2006). I am grateful to Helmut Puff and Patricia Simons for discussing the image with me and pointing this out.

[8](#). Matthias Mende, *Das alte Nürnberger Rathaus. Baugeschichte und Ausstattung des großen Saales und der Ratsstube* (Nuremberg, 1979), 1:88–95; David Cast, *The Calumny of Apelles: A Study in the Humanist Tradition* (London and New Haven, 1981), 89–120.

[9](#). *Gothic and Renaissance Art in Nuremberg 1300–1550* (New York and Munich, 1986), 329–30, states that the paintings on the north wall, including *The Calumny of Apelles*, were executed by Georg Pencz: Mende emphatically rejects this, pointing out that there is no contemporary evidence that Pencz was involved or was even in Nuremberg before 1523 (Mende, *Das alte Nürnberger Rathaus*, 80). Cast also attributes them to Pencz, but states that the Council hired Dürer in August 1521, artists were commissioned to carry out the work, and the whole thing was finished in March 1522; and also that there is no record of any payments by the Council to Pencz before 1523 (Cast, *The Calumny of Apelles*, 105, 112).

[10](#). There is also a painting of the subject by Sandro Botticelli of 1497, now in the Uffizi; and there are even majolica-ware plates that depict it. See, for example, *Broad-rimmed Bowl, the "Calumny of Apelles,"* by Nicola da Urbino (Urbino, 1522), The Ashmolean, Oxford; see also, on the bowl, Timothy Wilson, *Maiolica*, 2nd enlarged ed. (Oxford, 2003), 28–29. The bowl depicts Envy but makes no use of the potential for depicting hags.

[11](#). See Puff, “The Death of Orpheus”; and, for the Mantegna image, Cast, *The Calumny of Apelles*, fig. 4 (unpaginated).

[12](#). Mende, *Das alte Nürnberger Rathaus*, 194–211. We do not know what the picture looked like in the sixteenth-century version. The cycle, repainted in 1613, was repainted again in 1621, and it diverges from the Dürer sketch at many points, though the overall scheme is retained. The 1621 repainting of the image shows Invidia as a more matronly figure. Mende identifies Invidia in the original sketch by Dürer as a man, which would accord with Lucian’s description of the lost image, but the figure in Dürer’s sketch is clearly female, as is that in the drawing by Mantegna, which explains why the repainting of the image represents her as a woman, too. Apelles had also himself been the victim of calumny.

[13](#). By contrast, Ambrosius Holbein’s woodcut border showing the *Calumny of Apelles*, used by the Froben press in an edition of Erasmus’s *Adages* of 1523 and on his New Testament, among other works, shows Envy as a clothed old woman with bound and covered hair who looks nothing like a witch (Cast, *Calumny of Apelles*, 98–99 and fig. 19). On Envy as a hag, see [chapter 4](#) in this volume.

[14](#). A Nuremberg stained glass panel from the 1590s that also hung in the town hall exploits the same idea. The duty of the Council, the image admonishes, is to judge justly, trampling Envy (depicted as a witch) and Heresy (in the form of a Jew) underfoot. Here, the witch again draws on classical mythology: she is a Medusa figure with loose, curling snake-hair and exposed, sagging breasts. When artists like Rubens drew on this established iconography, their audiences knew the allegorical reference was to Envy. See, for a brilliant examination of this image, Charles Zika, “Cannibalism and Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe: Reading the Visual Images,” *History Workshop Journal* 44 (1977): 77–106.

[15](#). Norman Bryson, “Review of *The Calumny of Apelles: A Study in the Humanist Tradition*,” by David Cast, *Burlington Magazine* 124, no. 951 (1982): 370–71, esp. 371.

[16](#). Girolamo Mocetto, *The Calumny of Apelles*, engraving; Jörg Breu the Elder, *The Calumny of Apelles*, n.d., sketch. See also Leonbruno’s painting *Calumny of Apelles* from the early sixteenth century, which shows Envy as an old woman with three pouches and a dog.

[17](#). Peter Flötner, *The Calumny of Apelles*, 1534, woodcut. It illustrated a poem by Hans Sachs.

[18](#). Pieter Breughel the Elder, *Calumny of Apelles*; Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *The Calumny of Apelles*, n.d., drawing after Mantegna.

[19](#). The painting by Zuccaro is in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court Palace. The artist’s son Ottavio identified the figure of Envy as “Greed” in an explication of the painting published in 1619, ten years after the artist’s death; but this would depart from the standard iconography and was probably a mistake (see, on this image, Cast, *Calumny of Apelles*, 129–30 and fig. 31). There was also an engraving based on the painting by Luca Bertelli.

[20](#). Cornelis Cort, *Calumny of Apelles*, after Federico Zuccaro; the design also owes much to Giorgio Ghisi’s 1560 engraving of the subject, but Ghisi shows Invidia with bound hair and leathery nipples, and wearing only a loincloth — and the sex of the figure is less clearly female.

- [21](#). Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London, 1993), 323–24: he places his new monogram in a tablet, as Dürer did, on the edge of the image; see also Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft*, 11.
- [22](#). See Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture*, 323–62.
- [23](#). I am grateful to Deanna Pethebridge for this point.

4. ENVY

- [1](#). See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London, 1990); Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York and London, 1993); Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York and London, 2004). See also, for a powerful critique, Toril Moi, "What Is a Woman? Sex, Gender and the Body in Feminist Theory," in *Sex, Gender and the Body*, by Moi (1999; Oxford, 2005).
- [2](#). For a fuller statement of this argument, see the introduction to Ruth Harris and Lyndal Roper, eds., *The Art of Survival: Essays in Honour of Olwen Hufton* (Oxford, 2006).
- [3](#). William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001).
- [4](#). Ibid., 110–11.
- [5](#). Patrice Higonnet, "Terror, Trauma and the 'Young Marx' Explanation of Jacobin Politics," *Past & Present* 191 (2006): 121–64, esp. sec. 4.
- [6](#). I am grateful to Nick Stargardt for this point. See his *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives under the Nazis* (London, 2005).
- [7](#). Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean, eds., *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship* (Cambridge, 1984), 3.
- [8](#). See, for example, Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York and Oxford, 1988). "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 773–97.
- [9](#). David Sabean, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1984), esp. 170–72; "the incident suggests that the idea of conscience was still that of the Reformation, something which offers judgment and hindsight, is retroactive, but not a control mechanism along the lines of a 'superego' " (171).
- [10](#). See Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London, 2004). On images of envy, see also Patricia Simons, "Italian Classicism: Eroticism and Envy," forthcoming.
- [11](#). There are also some interesting representations which do not fit this model. Peter Dell's wooden figures depicting the seven deadly sins (ca. 1535) show Envy as a rather fetching mature woman with a snake around her arm (Germanisches Nationalmuseum Pl 7) — here the taste of the collector for slightly erotic female depictions of the sins (one shows a good deal of bare leg; another, cleavage) determined the image. Christian Schmid's seventeenth-century woodcut *Die sieben Todsünden* (in Dorothy Alexander in collaboration with Walter L. Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1600–1700: A Pictorial Catalogue*, 2 vols. [New York, 1977], 2:529) shows Envy sitting astride a dog, gnawing on her heart, but she is

minus her snake and mature rather than visibly old. But these are exceptions. For a powerful example of an allegory of Envy drawing on the imagery of the *Metamorphoses*, see Johann Wilhelm Baur's striking image *Allegorie des Neides (Die Zwietracht)* from ca. 1638–40, where an old woman Envy with dangling breasts and snake-hair blows a bellows inflaming violence and quarrelling. Baur had also illustrated Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the Envy figure emerges from a cave in the rock. This ink drawing was then acquired by the Augsburg artist Melchior Küsel, who published it in slightly altered form among *Ioannis Guilielmi Bauri Iconographia* (Augsburg, 1671) — this popular work was republished several times (see Hans-Martin Kaulbach with Heinrich Geissler, *Deutsche Zeichnungen vom Mittelalter bis zum Barock*, Bestandskatalog [Staatsgalerie Stuttgart Graphische Sammlung] [Ostfildern, 2007], 72–73).

[12](#). In the original sketch for this image, Satan is missing (see Jacques Callot, *Das gesamte Werk in zwei Bänden. I. Handzeichnungen*, introduction by Thomas Schröder, 2 vols. [Munich, 1971], 317).

[13](#). P. Ovidi Nasonis, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R. J. Tarrant (Oxford, 2004); Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. A. D. Melville (Oxford, 1986), 46–49.

[14](#). Hans Sachs, *Das feindtselig laster / der heymlich Neyd / mit seinen zwelff aygenschaften* (Nuremberg, 1534). Sachs produced much of this kind of verse. There is also, for instance, *Der Eygen nutz / das greulich Their / mit sein Zwölff Eygenschaften* (Nuremberg: Georg Merckel, n.d.); *Frau Traurigkeyt mit jhrer Eygenschaft. Mehr die Unnutz Frau Sorg Mehr die Starcke gewonheyt* (Nuremberg: Georg Merckel, 1554).

[15](#). See also his illustration to another poem by Sachs on envy: “Wer zu vil wil haben dem wirdt zu wenig ...,” also illustrated by Pencz (Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, rev. and ed. Walter L. Strauss, 4 vols. [New York, 1974], 3:963). This tells the story of how Jupiter sent Phoebus to earth, where he stumbled upon an envious and a miserly person. He offered the miser a wish, adding that whatever he wished for should be given double to his companion. The miser determined to wish for nothing, knowing he would get only half what the other received, and left it to his companion to make the wish. Thereupon the envious man took revenge by wishing that one of his own eyes be gouged out, so that his companion would be made blind. Sachs concludes that envy makes envious persons suffer. They delight in the misery of others even if they are about to suffer the same fate themselves, and their hearts are full of poison.

[16](#). There is an interesting variant on this image: in a later edition of the poem from 1553 (Nuremberg: Friderich Gutknecht), Envy is represented as a masculine-looking figure with bat wings in contradiction to the text; here, the printer had probably taken over the woodcut block of the illustration to Sachs's poem “The Hostile House of Envy” (*Das feindtselig Hauß des Neides / ausz der beschreibung Ouidii. Mercurius*, of which there is an edition with the same woodcut by Gutknecht from 1554). The image is far inferior to Pencz's print of 1534. Hans Burgkmair's woodcut series *Vices*, of 1510 shows Envy as a male figure, with a serpent appearing behind his ear (Geisberg, *German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, rev. and ed. Strauss, 2:459). Sachs's “House of Envy” explicitly describes Invidia as male because the German word is *der Neid*, even though this is not the case in Ovid. But

he was not the only person to make Ovid's Envy male: Volckmar Berckman also translated the passage into verse as a male figure (Johann Rhode, *Neidhard / oder Neidteufel* [Erfurt: Esias Mechler, 1582], fol. C iv r; Just Sieber, *Esau oder Neidhard zum Abscheu vorgestellt* [Schandau, 1682], 243–47).

[17.](#) Ingrid Ahrendt-Schulte, *Weise Frauen — böse Weiber. Die Geschichte der Hexen in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Freiburg, Basel, and Vienna, 1994), 30–37; Elmar Weiß, “Die Hexenprozesse in der Zent Grünsfeld,” *Wertheimer Jahrbuch* (1979–80): 33–63, 44.

[18.](#) Staatsarchiv Basel Stadt, Criminalia 4/3, Dilge Glaser, Jte Lichtermut, Agnes Salat, 1532; see also, for a similar story, Johann Gödelmann, *Von Zauberern Hexen und Unholden* (Latin 1591), trans. Georg Nigrinus (Frankfurt: Nicolaus Basse, 1592), 83, this time concerning two witches from Berlin who were executed in 1553.

[19.](#) Ulrich Molitor, *De lamiis et pythonicis mulieribus* (Basel, 1495). For a brilliant study of the images that accompany Molitor's text, see Natalie Kwan, “Woodcuts and Witches: Ulrich Molitor's *De Lamiis et Pythonicis Mulieribus*, 1489–1669” (M. St diss., University of Oxford, 2010).

[20.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 254.

[21.](#) Roper, *Witch Craze*, 117–19.

[22.](#) See Dieter Richter, *Schlaraffenland. Geschichte einer populären Phantasie* (Cologne, 1984).

[23.](#) StadtAA, Reichsstadt, Urg., Ursula Grön 1694, testimony of Euphrosina Eppenstein, 24 May 1694.

[24.](#) Lambert Daneau, *A Dialogue of Witches* (London, 1575), sig. E iii (v).

[25.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 254, Margaretha Menz, 5 May 1588. So also the demonologist Martin Del Rio, in an uncharacteristically skeptical passage, argued that pretty children tended to attract more notice if they fell ill: “the common people ... suspect some evil-doing and throw the blame for it upon the eyes and words of those who look at the children and praise them ... and since it is easy to find some wrinkled, misshapen old woman among their admirers, and since this kind of person is physically offensive, morose, and hateful, the harm is attributed to her rather than to anyone else” (Martin Del Rio, *Martin Del Rio: Investigations into Magic*, ed. and trans. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart [Manchester and New York, 2000], 125 [bk. 3, qu. 4, sec. 1]).

[26.](#) Kramer, *The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger*, ed. and trans. Rev. Montague Summers (London, 1928), 66, pt. 1, qu. 11; 140, pt. 2, qu. 1, chap. 13; and for the passages in the authoritative German edition, see Heinrich Kramer, *Der Hexenhammer*, ed. Wolfgang Behringer, Günter Jerouschek, and Werner Tschacher (Munich, 2000), 288, 474; and see now the translation by Christopher S. Mackay, *Malleus Maleficarum*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2006).

[27.](#) David Harley, “Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-Witch,” *Social History of Medicine* 3 (1990): 1–26; Gerd Schwerhoff, “Die Erdichtug der weisen Männer: Gegen falsche Übersetzungen von Hexenglauben und Hexenverfolgung,” in *Hexenverfolgung. Beiträge zur Forschung*, ed. Sönke Lorenz and Dieter Bauer (Würzburg, 1995).

[28.](#) Roper, *Witch Craze*, 69–81, on Nördlingen; the motif of cannibalism also appears in the Würzburg trials.

[29.](#) Rubens had studied with Vaenius in 1594–98 (see Otto Vaenius, *Amorum*

emblemata, facsimile ed. [London, 1996], introduction; and see Utrecht Emblem Project, http://emblems.let.uu.nl/project_project_info.html).

30. Heinrich Lutz, *Conrad Peutinger. Beiträge zu einer politischen Biographie* (Augsburg, 1958), 129, 374. Alciato, like Peutinger, was a jurist, and the two men dedicated works to each other, combining legal and humanistic studies.

31. John Manning, *The Emblem* (London, 2002), 38–49; Alciato, *Emblemata* (Padua: P. Tozzi, 1621), (it has 1,003 pages).

32. Manning, *The Emblem*.

33. Sabine Modersheim, “Herzemblematik bei Daniel Cramer,” in *The Emblem in Renaissance and Baroque Europe: Tradition and Variety*, ed. Alison Adams and Anthony J. Harper (Leiden, 1992).

34. Cornelia Kemp, “Vita Corneliana: Das emblematische Stammbuch von Theodor de Bry bis Peter Rollo,” in *The Emblem*, ed. Adams and Harper.

35. William H. Huseman, “The Entry of Heresy into the Emblem Tradition: Circe and the Great Whore of Babylon,” in *The Emblem*, ed. Adams and Harper.

36. Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum libellus* (Venice: Aldus, 1546), fol. 35v, emblem 71. The 1546 edition includes Envy in a series depicting the seven deadly sins. The 1550 edition shows a thin woman with a thorny stick and snake-hair: Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, eds., *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des xvi. und xvii. Jahrhunderts* (1967; Stuttgart, 1996), 1570–72; Alciato, *Emblemata*, Lyons 1550, trans. and annotated by Betty I. Knot (Aldershot, 1996). Tozzi’s edition of 1618 makes the sagging breasts very visible (131–32); and this is the model for the higher-quality image of 1621, which clearly shows Invidia with snake-hair. Geoffrey Whitney’s *Choice of Emblems* (1586), 94, has a version with a similar iconography; the poem reads:

What hideous hagge with visage sterne appeares?
Whose feeble limmes, can scarce the bodie staie:
This, Envie is: leane, pale, and full of yeares,
Who with the blisse of other pines awaie.
And what declares, her eating vipers broode?
That poysoned thoughtes, bee evermore her foode.
What meanes her eies? so bleared, sore, and redd:
Her mourninge still, to see an others gaine.
And what is mente by snakes upon her head?
The fruite that springes, of such a venomd braine.
But whie, her harte shee rentes within her brest?
It shewes her selfe, doth worke her owne unrest.
Whie lookes shee wronge? bicause shee woulde not see,
An happie wight, which is to her a hell:
What other partes within this furie bee?
Her harte, with gall: her tonge, with stinges doth swell.
And laste of all, her staffe with prickes aboundes:
Which showes her wordes, wherewith the good shee woundes.

Alciato's *Book of Emblems*, www.mun.ca/alciato/fr-w071.html.

[37](#). See, for instance, Jean Jacques Boissard, *Emblematum liber* (Frankfurt, 1593), 28, 29, 32, 33; and Boissard, *Emblèmes* (Metz, 1595), 39, 41; 44, 45 (Glasgow Emblems Project, www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/french/books.php?id=FBOb). Guillaume La Perrière, *La morosophie* (Lyon, 1553), no. 64.

[38](#). Henkel and Schöne, *Emblemata*, 195; and for the Nuremberg example, see Mende, *Das alte Nürnberger Rathaus*, 347, *Virtutis invidia comes*; and for a photograph of it before destruction, see www.zi.fotothek.org/obj/obj19004212/018/8450_0001/Einzelbild.

[39](#). Huseman, *The Entry of Heresy*, 212, though Huseman does not make the connection to envy or witchcraft.

[40](#). Bartolemaeus Anulus, *Picta poesis*, 39.

[41](#). La Perrière, *La morosophie*, no. 64.

[42](#). Vaenius, 50/51 *Amoris vmbra invidia*; Henkel and Schöne, *Emblemata*, 1572; see Heinsius, nr. 22, *Amoris domitrix invidia* (envy pursues love). The interpretation runs that envy follows love like a shadow, so that only hidden love is safe from it, but the image suggests a more complex emotional dynamic of kinship between love and envy. In another version of the topos of love and envy, we see a chubby couple shadowed by two snake-haired versions of Envy, one of whom holds a viper in her hand. In the background we see burning buildings: the message about the destructive power of envy is clear.

[43](#). See Richard M. Golden, *Encyclopaedia of Witchcraft*, 4 vols. (Santa Barbara and Oxford, 2006), article on Binsfeld by Johannes Dillinger, 1:122–24.

[44](#). Peter Binsfeld, *Tractat von Bekantnuß der Zauberer und Hexen* (Trier, 1590), fol. 19v.

[45](#). Ibid., fol. 38r–v.

[46](#). Ludwig Rabus, *Wider Neun fürneme Haubtlaster / Alzs 1. Fuellery 2. Geytz 3. Gottslestern. 4. Spil. 5. Hurerey. 6. Nachreden. 7. Vndanckbarkeit. 8. Hoffart. 9. Neyd...* (Nuremberg: Johann Vom Berg and Ulrich Neuber, 1561). In this series of sermons, each lasting no more than about three pages, *Neyd* is the last of the sins to be castigated. The sermon is not particularly insightful about envy, nor does it place it above the other sins. I am most grateful to the Wolfenbüttel Library for providing me with a copy.

[47](#). Johann Rhode, *Neidhard / oder Neidteufel: Das ist: Klarer Bericht / vom Neid / was er sey / woher er kome / wie viel schaden er thu / vnd gestrafft werde* (Erfurt: Esiaiam Mechler, 1582), fol. B vi r–v.

[48](#). Ibid., fol. D ii r.

[49](#). Ibid., fol. E v v.

[50](#). Ibid., fol. E vi r. Rhode provides three stories at this point, all of them about women and childbirth.

[51](#). Ibid., fol. G 3v; G 4r; for an example of such *Fraisketten*, see Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Tsb 40 360805.

[52](#). Georg Paul Harsdörffer, *Herrn Georg Paul Harsdörffers Erörterung der Frage: Ob der Neid die Tugend hindere oder befördere* (1690). It is bound with a set of tracts by Johann Arndt, a theologian with mystical tendencies who was admired by Pietists, and Johann Rist, a theologian and writer who became pastor at Wedel and

helped create the Elbschwanorden, a literary society dedicated to the German language; he is also associated with Pietism (*Herrn Johann Arndts und Herrn Johann Ristens, auch anderer hochgelahrten Männer vortreffliche Schrifften wider die unchristlichen heimtückischen Ehren-Diebe, Spötter, Verfolger ... Sambt einen Anhang von ... Ungeistlichen Geistlichen ... Mit Herrn Harstörffers Erörterung der Frage: Ob der Neid die Tugend hindere oder befördere, etc. [Herrn Johann Arndt's Büchlein, wie wir durch Christum und aller Heiligen Exempel böse Mäuler und falsche Zungen überwinden sollen]* [Wedel: H. Werner, 1690]). I have been unable to discover more about Georg Paul Harsdörffer, and this work is not listed in VD17; it may be that the author is the famous Nuremberg poet Georg Philip Harsdörfer (1607–1658), but I have not been able to locate it in his work.

[53](#). David Sabeau, *Kinship in Neckarhausen 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1998); David Sabeau, *Property, Production and Family in Neckarhausen 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1990); Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1989); Govind Sreenivasan, *The Peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487–1726: A Rural Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2004).

[54](#). Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971); Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London, 1970).

[55](#). David Meili, *Hexen in Wasterkingen: Magie und Lebensform in einem Dorf des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts*, Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Volkskunde (Basel and Bonn, 1980); and developed in Edward Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe: Culture, Cognition and Everyday Life* (Houndmills, 2008).

[56](#). See Eva Labouvie, *Andere Umstände. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Geburt* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna, 2000); Labouvie, *Beistand in Kindsnöten. Hebammen und weibliche Kultur auf dem Land (1550–1910)* (Frankfurt, 1999).

[57](#). See Roper, *Witch Craze*.

[58](#). Melanie Klein, “Envy and Gratitude,” in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works, 1946–1963*, by Klein (London, 1975), 181.

[59](#). Ibid., 183–90.

[60](#). Ibid., 218.

[61](#). Ibid., 219ff.

[62](#). Martin Del Rio, *Florida mariana sive de laudibus sacratissimae virginis deiparae panegyrici XIII* (Antwerp, 1598); *Opus Marianum sive de laudibus et virtutibus Mariae virginis in 4 partes* (Lugduni, 1607).

[63](#). Klein, “Envy and Gratitude,” 182, 202; she also cites Chaucer.

[64](#). Ibid., 206ff.

5. WITCHCRAFT AND VILLAGE DRAMA

[1](#). A census of 1719 lists 52 *Lehensleute* and 13 *Beisitzer*. These were heads of household. In 1746, there were 59 and 8 respectively; in 1769, 55 and 15. In 1719, there were also 29 unmarried sons; in 1746, 66, and in 1769, 52. A census from 1833 lists 68 families, giving a total of 482 souls (*Kreisbeschreibungen des Landes*

Baden-Württemberg. *Der Landkreis Biberach*, 2 vols. [1987; Sigmaringen, 1990], 1:403).

2. For more on this series of cases, see Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London, 2004), 222–46.

3. See Hans Albrecht Oehler, rev. ed. of Sixt Bachmann, ed., *Sebastian Sailers Schriften im schwäbischen Dialekte* (Weissenhorn, 2000), 10–11 (hereafter cited as Oehler, *Sebastian Sailer*; all quotations from Sailer’s works are taken from this edition), preface by Sixt Bachmann to the edition of 1819. Bachmann was a member of the order in Marchtal and had known Sailer. He compiled the first collected edition of Sailer’s works, based on copies of the works he was able to find. Bachmann’s preface to this volume is our main source for Sailer’s biography. In it, Bachmann alludes to printed copies of various plays from presses in Kreuznach, Riedlingen, and Ulm, all with many transcription mistakes. See also *ibid.*, “Nachwort,” by Hans Albrecht Oehler, 274–75.

4. On Sailer and on Marchtal, see Andrea Polonyi, “Die Übertragung des heiligsten Kreuzpartikels von Rom nach Marchtal. Zum Erscheinungsbild barocker Reliquienverehrung”; Ludwig Walter, “Pater Sebastian Sailer — Der schwäbische Mundartdichter aus Marchtal”; Konstantin Maier, “Der schwäbische Meister der ‘geistlichen Wohlredenheit.’ Chorherr Sebastian Sailer (1714–1777) von Marchtal”; Karl Butscher, “Das Leben eines Chorherrn auf einer inkorporierten Pfarrei der Abtei Marchtal”; Winfried Nuber, “Abtei Marchtal und seine Pfarrei in der Stadt Munderkingen,” all in *Marchtal. Prämonstratenserabtei, Fürstliches Schloß, Kirchliche Akademie*, ed. Max Müller, Rudolf Reinhardt, and Wilfried Schöntag (Ulm, 1992); Franz Georg Brustgi, ed., *Sebastian Sailers Schfiften im schwäbischen Dialekte. Gesammelt und mit einer Vorrede versehen von Sixt Bachmann* (facsimile of Bachmann edition) (Reutlingen, 1976), “Ergänzungen der Vorrede Sixt Bachmanns,” and Bachmann, “Vorrede.” Sailer worked as an assistant priest in Seekirch from 1745 until 1747 (Brustgi, “Ergänzungen,” VI), and then worked for many periods in nearby Reutlingendorf and Dieterskirch.

5. SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, 27 April 1747, testimony of Conrad Citterel, pp. 1ff.

6. SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, pp. 15, 19; 19 and 20 May 1747. He mentioned the “cross” all this uncertainty had forced him to bear. His allegiance became even clearer later, when he went to the authorities in Obermarchtal to allege that his wife must have realized through occult means that he was outside her cell and had called out to him (SAS, Dep. 30, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, p. 106, June 1747). And he had undertaken a visit to his stepdaughter Barbara’s girlfriend, to quiz her about Barbara’s behavior: now, he reported the telltale details he had learned that suggested his stepdaughter was a witch, too (107).

7. SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, pp. 144ff., 26 September 1747 and following.

8. Walter, “Pater Sebastian Sailer”; Oehler, *Sebastian Sailer*, 10 (Bachmann, “Vorrede”).

9. It used to be thought that the plays were performed by Sailer himself at various local gatherings; however, Monika Küble has recently argued that the

audience would have been an educated, bourgeois public, not peasants themselves.

[10.](#) See David Sabeau, *Property, Production and Family in Neckarhausen 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1990); and David Sabeau, *Kinship in Neckarhausen 1700–1870* (Cambridge, 1998); Thomas Robisheaux, *Rural Society and the Search for Order in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1989); Govind Sreenivasan, *The Peasants of Ottobeuren 1487–1723: A Rural Society in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2004); and, on agriculture and village dynamics, Rainer Beck, *Unterfinning. Ländliche Welt vor Anbruch der Moderne* (Munich, 1993).

[11.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Kloster Marchtal, Bd. 1951, Beschreibung of 1646; Bd. 1961, Specification of 1733.

[12.](#) Oehler, *Sebastian Sailer*, 198–219 (*Schultheißenwahl zu Limmelsdorf*).

[13.](#) Ibid., 194–96 (*Schwäbischer Sonn- und Mondfang*).

[14.](#) “Ih gieb koi Vautum ih, ih laß dar Herrschaft über. / Maitweaga Schultas sey dar Otter oder Biber. / Denn sui woißt wohl, wear daugt” (Oehler, *Sebastian Sailer*, 211 (*Schultheißenwahl zu Limmelsdorf*), and see 176.

[15.](#) And Balg gets the last word, even though the district official locks him up for insolence. The play finishes as Balg says, “That’s how it goes in the world; now our play’s over” (“So goaht as in dar Wealt; jetz hoat dar G’schpaß a End”) (Oehler, *Sebastian Sailer*, 219 [*Schultheißenwahl zu Limmelsdorf*]). Sailer has a predilection for this kind of pragmatic moral, and the proverbs and sayings he mints often run along these lines: “Zua g’scheahne Sacha muaß ma s’Bescht reda” (196).

[16.](#) “Ma sait is viel vom ebiga Leaba, / Hodiho, Alleluia. / Und noh viel maih vom Stuirä geaba / Hodi Hodiho, Alleluia” (Oehler, *Sebastian Sailer*, 171, [*Die sieben Schwaben*]).

[17.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, 27 April 1747. The same pattern was evident in other cases: Maria Bingasser had brought a defamation suit that turned into a witchcraft trial against her (SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Gutachten von Sättelin, 28 February 1747); and Catharina Schmid’s case had also started with an insult (SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Catharina Schmid, 1745).

[18.](#) Catharina Schmid had been accused of causing the possession of “the Holl girl,” and Maria Bingasser was accused of causing Veronica Traub to become possessed; Magdalena Bollman was blamed for the possession of Anna Kunisslin; while Barbara Getschler was also accused of causing Münst’s possession. All these cases involved dramatic physical sufferings of the victim, while their kin made repeated efforts to get them cured, consulting religious specialists like the Capuchins.

[19.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, p. 106, June 1747; p. 106, June 1747.

[20.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Urgicht of Anna Oberländer, 1747, Urgicht of Maria Bingasser, 1747.

[21.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, pp. 1–10, 27 April 1747, testimony of Conrad Citterell; pp. 32–33, 20 May 1747, testimony of Conrad Citterell.

[22.](#) SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, pp. 86–87, 3 June 1747, testimony of Anna Maria Münst.

[23](#). In all the trials, witnesses mention a lot of fairly aggressive physical contact, hitting, striking, slapping, and so on on the part of the witches and their victims. This may be because it was believed that if you hit a witch, she could not harm you. The witch harmed her victims by touch, and witnesses recall even apparently glancing physical contact (SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, p. 40, 20 May 1747, testimony of Francisca Jos; and see Urgicht of Anna Oberländer).

[24](#). She had allegedly said two years before, “No one apart from Schmidin says that I’m a witch and I don’t care about her”: since Münst, known as the Schmidin, was probably a strange woman, this may have been the general view (SAS, Dep 30, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, p. 88, 3 June 1747, testimony of Anna Maria Münst). So also, while Francisca Jos had said, after Bollman had touched her on her left arm in front of the Capuchin church door, that if Bollman were a witch, as people said, she’d be anxious: since Münst had journeyed with her to Biberach, she may very well have thought this was only a jokey confidence (SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, p. 97, 3 June 1747).

[25](#). On the religious culture of Counter-Reformation in southern Germany, see Marc Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550–1750* (Cambridge, 2001); and on pilgrimages in the sixteenth century in Bavaria, see Philip Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993); on art, see Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, 2002); see also David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: The Bavarian Beacon* (Cambridge and New York, 2006).

[26](#). SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Magdalena Bollman, p. 90, 3 June 1747, testimony of Anna Maria Münst; and pp. 120, 127.

[27](#). SAS, Dep. 30, Rep. VI, Marchtaler Hexenprozesse, Pak. 255, Urgicht of Anna Oberländer, 1747.

[28](#). Winfried Nuber, “Abtei Marchtal und seine Pfarrei in der Stadt Munderkingen,” in *Marchtal Prämonstratenserabtei, Fürstliches Schloß, Kirchliche Akademie*, ed. Müller, Reinhardt, and Schöntag, 142.

[29](#). Forster, *Catholic Revival*, 220–28.

[30](#). Though we do know that he supported the protection of the lying-in period of four weeks, the scene of so many witchcraft accusations (Butscher, “Das Leben eines Chorherrn,” 290); and on lying-in and witchcraft, see Roper, *Witch Craze*.

6. WITCHES’ CHILDREN

[1](#). SAW Historischer Saal VII 25/377, fols. 50 r ff., 18 June 1627. First the schoolmaster was informed, then witness statements were taken locally, then the case moved to Retzbach and from there to Karlstadt, the district administrative center, and finally to the territory’s capital.

[2](#). He was also financially well-off, with assets of more than 1,000 gulden and farms and fields (SAW Historischer Saal VII 25/377, fols. 52 r ff., 19 June 1627; 73

r/v, 22 January 1628). However, some of the children who were executed also came from prosperous and elite families.

3. SAW Historischer Saal VII 25/377, fols. 70ff., 22 January 1628.

4. On the Würzburg trials, see Elmar Weiß, “Die Hexenprozesse im Hochstift Würzburg,” in *Unterfränkische Geschichte*, vol. 3: *Vom Beginn des konfessionellen Zeitalters bis zum Ende des Dreißigjährigen Krieges*, by Peter Kolb and Ernst-Günter Krenig (Würzburg, 1995), 327–62; Christel Beyer, “Hexen-Leut, so zu Würzburg gerichtet,” in *Der Umgang mit Sprache und Wirklichkeit in Inquisitionsprozessen wegen Hexerei*, Deutsche Hochschulschriften 1, Deutsche Sprache und Literatur 948 (Frankfurt am Main, 1981); and Friedrich Merzbacher, *Die Hexenprozesse in Franken*, 2nd ed. (1957; Munich, 1970). On children in witch trials in Würzburg, see Robert Walinski-Kiel, “The Devil’s Children: Child Witch-Hunts in Early Modern Germany,” *Continuity and Change* (1996): 171–91; and Hartwig Weber, *Kinderhexenprozesse* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991), 261–67. On child witches, see, in particular, Rainer Beck, “Das Spiel mit dem Teufel. Freisinger Kinderhexenprozesse 1715–1723,” *Historische Anthropologie* 10 (2002): 374–415; and Wolfgang Behringer, “Kinderhexenprozesse. Zur Rolle von Kindern in der Geschichte der Hexenverfolgung,” *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung* 16 (1989): 31–47; Rainer Walz, “Kinder in Hexenprozessen. Die Grafschaft Lippe 1654–1663,” in *Hexenverfolgung und Regionalgeschichte. Die Grafschaft Lippe im Vergleich*, ed. Jürgen Scheffler, Gerd Schwerhoff, and Gisela Wilbertz, Studien zur Regionalgeschichte 4 (Bielefeld, 1994); Hans Sebald, *Der Hexenjunge. Fallstudie eines Inquisitionsprozesses* (Marburg, 1992); and Weber, “Von der verführten Kinder Zauberei.” *Hexenprozesse gegen Kinder im alten Württemberg* (Sigmaringen, 1996).

5. Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß / oder Zerstörte Teuflische Bunds-und Buhl-Freundschaft mit den menschen ...* (Augsburg, 1687): on Mora, see 354–70. Spitzel also mentions the cases at Calw (Weber, *Kinderhexenprozesse*, 283). Bekker mocked the children’s testimony about sex. They reported that the Devil would withdraw into a private room with the children he wanted to have sex with — Bekker poked fun at this Devil who retained such a sense of propriety. Eberhard David Hauber, *Bibliotheca. Act et scripta magica*, 3 vols. (Lemgo, 1738–45), vol. 2, Stück 30, 1742. Interestingly, Hauber omitted any reference to the Augsburg case that had concluded a few years before, though he did include other cases from Augsburg.

6. Another reason children sometimes became embroiled in witchcraft cases was that the victims of possession tended to be children and adolescents: the Devil would enter the body of the sufferer and cause them terrible torments. Possessions were directly linked to the witch craze because they dramatized the power of the Devil so luridly and because a witch might cause someone to become possessed. Clergymen like the Lutheran Gottlieb Spitzel became fascinated, like many, by such a case, when he desperately attempted to free Regina Schiller from the power of the Devil: she suffered from possession for over a decade. Where Catholic priests could perform exorcism, commanding the Devil to leave, Lutherans like Spitzel could use only prayer. Spitzel and other Augsburg Lutheran clergy became pastorally involved in a series of high-profile possession cases, all of which concerned adolescents and young adults (see Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in*

Baroque Germany [London, 2004]).

7. Malleus, 3ff., pt. 1, qu. 1; and see qu. 2 on fascination and perception; see also Claudia Swan, *Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland: Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629)* (Cambridge, 2005).

8. Malleus, 140–45, pt. 2, qu. 1, chap. 13.

9. On changelings, see Roper, *Witch Craze*, 98–103.

10. Henri Boguet, *An Examen of Witches*, trans. E. A. Ashwin, ed. Montague Summers (London 1929) (French, 1590).

11. Peter Binsfeld, *Tractat von Bekantnuss der Zauberer und Hexen* (Trier, 1590), fol. 111r.

12. Boguet, *An Examen*, 155.

13. “Der Hexen brauch seye es Kinder Verführen” (StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 14 July 1701, Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Maria Barbara Hueber).

14. Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, ed. and trans. Montague Summers (London, 1929), 89, 98, 105.

15. Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l’inconstance des mauvais anges et démons* (1612; Paris, 1613): the second edition contains the engraving.

16. SAW Historischer Saal VII fol. 25/377, fol. 71v, 22 January 1628.

17. StadtAA, Urgichten, Caspar Meyer 1686; Urgichten, Maria Fleck 1685, third interrogation, qu. 113. For the text of the prayer, which was repeated four years later in the interrogation of Anna Juditha Wagner, who had learned it in the orphanage where Fleck’s daughters were placed after their mother’s execution: Urgichten, Anna Juditha Wagner 1689, qu. 57; testimony 24 December 1689 of Trostknecht. Strafbuch des Rats 17 November 1685, pp. 543–44: the rhyme also played on the girls’ surname, Fleck.

18. SAW Historischer Saal VII fol. 25/377, fols. 71v, 73r, 22 January 1628, “Hier stehe ich auf dem Mist vnd verlaugne den H. Jesus Christ.” Merckler’s rhyme about old women clearly puzzled the authorities as well, and at one point, the scribe has added a “nit” to make it read, “old women don’t eat much,” which destroys the meter of the rhyme.

19. SAW Historischer Saal VII fol. 25/377, fols. 107–18, 26 October 1628; on the Augsburg case, see Roper, *Witch Craze*, chap. 9.

20. See Weiß, “Die Hexenprozesse im Hochstift Würzburg,” 350–52; Weber, *Kinderhexenprozesse*, 283–84. Boys and girls may also have mentioned each other because the judges were interested in sex between them; but the statements mention similar details, and it is clear that boys and girls knew what the others were confessing. School also featured in the case of another young girl, Regina Groninger, who was accused of witchcraft in Augsburg in 1702, and had become caught up in a trial when she brought sandwiches of excrement to school, horrifying her schoolmates. A loner, she does not seem to have involved other children in her diabolic fantasies or to have tried to recruit other children to the Devil (Roper, *Witch Craze*, 204–7).

21. Roper, *Witch Craze*, 221; SAW Hist Saal VII fol. 25/3777, fol. 70r, 22 January 1628.

22. Witches famously flew into cellars and stole the wine, but Merckler got this

detail slightly wrong, too, and confessed to flying into his own cellar (SAW Historischer Saal VII fol. 25/377, fol. 73v, 22 January 1628); Anna Krug was also baptized in the Devil's name, but the water was a "dung puddle," a detail unique to her (fol. 75r, 22 January 1628).

[23](#). Roper, *Witch Craze*, 232; SAW Hist Saal VII fol. 25/377, fol. 43v, 31 March 1627; fol. 75r, 22 January 1628.

[24](#). Staatsund Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod. Aug. 127, fol. 208; Christoph Ehinger, *Daemonologia oder etwas neues vom Teufel* (Augsburg, 1681); on Regina Schiller, see Staatsund Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod. August 288; see also Dietrich Blaufuss, *Reichsstadt und Pietismus — Philipp Jacob Spener und Gottlieb Spitzel aus Augsburg* (Neustadt an der Aisch, 1977).

[25](#). Spitzel, *Gebrochne Macht*, 354–70; and for the 1685 Augsburg case, 230–32. Spitzel did, however, think that children confused dreams and reality. StadtAA, Urgichten, Caspar Meyer 1686; Maria Fleck, 1685; Strafbuch des Rats 17 November 1685, pp. 543–44.

[26](#). Horst Jesse, *Die Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Augsburg* (Pfaffenhofen, 1983); Blaufuss, *Reichsstadt und Pietismus*; and on the orphanages in general, see Thomas Max Safley, *Charity and Economy in the Orphanages of Early Modern Augsburg* (Boston, 1997).

[27](#). Helmut Baier, "Die evangelische Kirche zwischen Pietismus, Orthodoxie und Aufklärung," in *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg*, ed. Günther Gottlieb et al., 2nd ed. (1985); Etienne Francois, *Die unsichtbare Grenze: Protestanten und Katholiken in Augsburg 1648–1806* (Sigmaringen, 1991), 246–52.

[28](#). On this case, see Roper, *Witch Craze*, 204–21.

[29](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, Anna Maria Christeiner, 1701 b; Elisabeth Christeiner, 1701 b.

[30](#). In 1698 and 1699, Andreas Hueber paid 60 fl. 10 kr. 1 d. in tax; but in 1700, only 10 fl. 10 kr. 1 d.; StadtAA, Steuerbücher, 1698, fol. 88 d.; 1699, fol. 86b; 1700, fol. 86b: the sum was paid on 14 June 1704; and he paid the same tax in following years: 1702, fol. 85c. His tax district was In der Bachen Hof. Safley calculates that the richest 4 percent of the population in 1688 paid taxes of 100 gulden or more, while just under a quarter paid the "have naught" tax rate. This would put the Huebers at the upper end of the "broad middle strata," part of the growing Lutheran elite (Safley, *Charity and Economy*, 44–45, 56).

[31](#). StadtAA, Verbrecherbuch 1700–1806, p. 31, 20 August 1701. It is evident that she had also been advised by Pastor Mueller, the superintendent of the Lutheran church at Augsburg (StadtAA, Christeiner 1701 b, Confrontation of Anna Maria Christeiner with Maria Barbara Hueber, 13 July 1701). When asked why she had looked at her mother when she was asked a particular question, she said that Senior Mueller had told her she didn't have to answer everyone.

[32](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b. She would first have had to make a statement in the mayor's office. I have drawn on the statement Maria Barbara made to the judges, dated 1 April 1701 (wrongly headed 1700), and the record of her statements made by her father and taken in his house dated 2, 5, 6, and 9 April 1701. She also said that the witches constantly changed appearance, now old, now young; and she described another scene with fashionably dressed witches, wearing

clothes in the French style, who gathered on a flowery meadow.

[33](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Maria Barbara Christeiner (statement recorded by father), 9 April 1701. Maria said the incident took place two years before.

[34](#). Sigmund Freud, “Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy” (1909), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed. James Strachey et al. (London, 1953–74), 10:5–148; Freud, “Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood,” 11:63–137.

[35](#). Since the onset of puberty in the early modern period was generally later than it is today, it is likely that, at twelve and a half, she was still in the latency period.

[36](#). *Hundstägige Erquickstunden. Das ist / Schöne / Lustige Moralishe und Historische Discursß vnd Abbildungen* (Frankfurt, 1650) included a vast variety of stories about the Devil, witches, and other related matters; the title page makes it explicit that the aim of the collection is to drive away “Das schwäre Gemüht der Menschen zu erfrischen / die Melancoleyen zu vertreiben”—a nice irony, since it was widely held by those who took witchcraft seriously that melancholy might lead one to fall into the clutches of the Devil and incline one to witchcraft. Johann Praetorius (Hans Schultze), *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung ...* (Leipzig and Frankfurt, 1668); see 313–71 for the famous passage on flight and the sabbath on which Goethe’s *Faust* drew. Praetorius’s work is clearly a miscellany designed to entertain, stuffed with acrostics, anagrams, and puzzles. He draws omnivorously on the comic Devil books, but places them alongside the canonical demonologists, Bodin, Meder, Rémy, Binsfeld, Grillando, and the rest. Much of the book is plagiarized material, which he uses to create a giant composite of knowledge on witchcraft — and which could also form a powerful imaginative resource, not just for Goethe. *Daemonologia Rubinzalii* (Frankfurt, 1661) includes material on ghosts, Silesian legends, and superstition. It is much more difficult to trace elements of fairy tale that might have been circulating in Augsburg. The collections of French fairy tales made by Charles Perrault or Madame d’Aulnoy do not appear to have been translated into German by 1700, though other works of Perrault were. On the origins of the fairy tale, see Ruth Bottigheimer, unpublished lectures, Magdalen College, Oxford, 2005; and her *Grimms’ Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (New Haven and London, 1987).

[37](#). Eberhard Happel, *Größte Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt, oder sogenannte Relationes curiosae*, 5 vols. (Hamburg, 1683–90) (vol. 2 has two parts).

[38](#). See, for example, the works of Jean Bodin, Nicolaus Rémy, and others, published in a multipart series entitled *Beschreibung Teuffelischer Zauberund Hexen-Possen; Der bösen Geister und Gespensten Wunder-seltzahme Historien und Nächtliche Erscheinungen; Der Gespensten Gauckel-Wercks Dritter Theil* (1693; Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Leipzig, 1698).

[39](#). Though Elisabeth Christeiner could not write, she insisted that she could certainly read (StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Marx Hueber, 12 July 1701). Marx Hueber said the book in which he had to sign had three “bandlen” (qu. 147); asked what kind of a book it was, he said he could not see the contents. Later in the same confrontation (qu. 247),

Elisabeth mentioned a book that her father had bought for 6 kreuzer; and when she was interrogated on 11 July, she denied that she had signed the children to the Devil but said that the children might have written in her books (Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Elisabeth Christeiner, 11 July 1701, qu. 247). Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Marx Hueber, 12 July 1701, qu. 164, 165: Marx insisted the book was Spitzel's *Gebrochne Macht*. In the interrogatories put to both women, the book is described as "ein buch mit gemälden" depicting "hexen auf gablen fahren, auch wie sie geessen u. getruncken, u. wider s.v. von sich gaben" (6 April 1701); Spitzel's book has several illustrations, one of which is drawn from the frontispiece of Johann Praetorius's *Blockes-Berges Verrichtung* of 1668 combined with an image by the Augsburg artist Melchior Küsel in an illustrated Bible, and which does show witches flying, eating, and defecating (207). On the complex history of this image, see Charles Zika, "Picturing Witchcraft in the Later Seventeenth Century," in *A Sourcebook of Early Modern History: In Honor of Susan C. Karant-Nunn on her 70th Birthday*, ed. Ute Lotz-Heumann (Tucson, Ariz., 2011).

[40](#). Charles Zika, "The Witch of Endor," manuscript, University of Oxford, 2003. There was also a Bible illustrated by the Augsburg artist Melchior Küsel that showed the Witch of Endor with a wand, surrounded by fantastical creatures, including one like a lizard with a long tail; and Maria may have known this Bible; I am grateful to Charles Zika for this information and a copy of the image. And a remarkable series of etchings produced by a circle of late-seventeenth-century Augsburg artists including Joseph Werner, Johann Heinrich Schönfeld, and his student Gabriel Ehinger, depicted witches, magicians, treasure seekers, and ghosts (discussed in chap. 2): it is conceivable that Maria had seen pictures like these (see Chistina Thon, ed., *Augsburger Barock* [Augsburg, 1968], nos. 164, 344, 402, 403; pp. 140, 153). Schönfeld, who was Lutheran, painted a picture of the Witch of Endor which he dedicated to David Thoman, a Council official of Augsburg. These were the circles in which the Huebers moved; according to Maria Barbara, Liesel Christeiner tricked her into going to her mother's house by saying they had been invited to dine with various town councillors and prominent Augsburgers whom Maria Barbara knew. Schönfeld's pupil Ehinger produced a copper etching of the image, which would also have circulated. On children's Bibles, see Ruth Bottigheimer, "Bible Reading, 'Bibles' and the Bible for Children in Early Modern Germany," *Past & Present* 139 (1993): 66–89.

[41](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 13 July 1701, Confrontation of Anna Maria Christeiner with Maria Barbara Hueber.

[42](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 14 July 1701, Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Maria Barbara Hueber.

[43](#). See Sigmund Freud, "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905), in *The Standard Edition*, vol. 7. Freud's account has since been deepened and complicated by a richer psychoanalytic understanding of children's imaginative worlds. See, for example, Melanie Klein, *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, ed. and trans. Alix Strachey and H. A. Thorner (London, 1973); D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London, 1971); D. W. Winnicott, *The Piggie: An Account of the Psychoanalytic Treatment of a Little Girl* (London, 1977). I have drawn on this work in understanding these cases.

[44.](#) SAW Historischer Saal VII fol. 25/377, fol. 70r, 22 January 1628; fols. 107–18, 26 October 1628.

[45.](#) SAW Historischer Saal VII fol. 25/377, fol. 92v, 12 August 1628.

[46.](#) For a full account of this case, see Roper, *Witch Craze*, 181–203.

[47.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Regina Groninger, 1st interrogation, 17 May 1702, qu. 4; see also, on this case, Roper, *Witch Craze*, 204ff. The Groninger and Hueber cases proceeded in parallel, Groninger's case also coming before the Protestant synod in 1700 and 1702 (see Staatsund Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod. Augs 289, *Acta puncto maleficii et tentationis diabolicae*, Incomplete Acta, Ein mit Satanischen Versuchung gequältes Magdlein Regina Groningerin gennant betr.). In Anno 1700 und 1702, 25 August 1700, 20 September 1700, 6 October 1700, 27 January 1702; the case passed to the Council and was dealt with by the criminal justice system on 17 May 1702.

[48.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Statement of Hans Adam Hartmann, Scharfrichter, 1 April 1701. On executioners in Augsburg, see Kathy Stuart, *Defiled Trades and Social Outcasts: Honor and Ritual Pollution in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1999).

[49.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Maria Barbara Hueber, 1 April 1701.

[50.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 12 July 1701, Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Marx Hueber, 12 July 1701.

[51.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Statement of Maria Barbara Hueber (father's report), 6 and 9 April 1701.

[52.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, Confrontation of Anna Maria Christeiner with Marx Hueber, 13 July 1701.

[53.](#) StadtAA, Verbrecherbuch 1700–1806, p. 31, 20 August 1701.

[54.](#) He may also have been encouraged to do this because, when she made her first formal statement to the court officials on 1 April 1701, Maria was advised to write down anything that occurred to her later.

[55.](#) On the “Scheiterhaufen”: StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 14 July 1701, Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Maria Barbara Hueber.

[56.](#) StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 14 July 1701, Confrontation of Elisabeth Christeiner with Maria Barbara Hueber.

[57.](#) The two judges assigned to the case, who were always members of the Small Council serving in rotation, were Johann Christoph Koch, a patrician and a Lutheran; and Nicolaus Ferdinand Langenmantel, also a patrician, but Catholic. Langenmantel, the Catholic, was the younger and less experienced of the two. He had joined the Small Council only in 1699, just two years before the case, and he had a long political career ahead of him, resigning his offices in 1733, and dying in 1758; Koch had served on the town's civil court from 1682 to 1685, and had moved on to the Small Council in 1685. In 1701, he was a highly experienced politician and judge who had served on the criminal court during the period of a series of high-profile witchcraft cases: at least twenty-one individuals underwent trials between 1685 and 1701, including the notorious case of a group of witches executed in 1685, Anna Juditha Wagner (executed in 1690), Ursula Grön (executed in 1694), and several other lying-in maids whose trials took place in the 1690s.

Koch died in 1717 (StadtAA, Benedict von Paris, “Besetzung aller Aemter in der Reichsstadt Augsburg angefangen Ao 1548 bis zur Aufloesung der reichsstaedischen Verfassung Ao 1806”).

[58](#). StadtAA, Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, statements of neighbors, 1 and 4 April 1701; 4 April 1701; and petitions from Johann Martin Christeiner and Anna Katherina Christeiner, 6 August 1701. Anna Maria Christeiner lived in the tax district Vor dem Schmidhaus and paid 25 cr. 1 d. in 1699; 36 d. in 1700; and thereafter 30 kr. 1 d. (Steuerbücher 1698, 91 a; 1699 fol. 89b; 1700 fol. 89a; 1701 fol. 88b; 1702 fol. 88b). Anna Maria was aged sixty-four or sixty-five; her daughter Elisabeth (“Liesel”), forty-four (StadtAA, Christeiner 1701 b, Urgichten, Anna Maria Christeiner, 6 April 1701; Elisabeth Christeiner, 6 April 1701, 6 August 1701).

[59](#). StadtAA, Verbrecherbuch 1700–1806, p. 31, 20 August 1701; the draft Urfehde is recorded in Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, 20 August 1701. StadtAA, Steuerbücher 1703, fol. 89a: Christeiner’s widow is marked as “tod ab.” The two women attempted to pursue a case against Andreas Hueber for wrongful accusation (Urgichten, Christeiner 1701 b, petition 8 November 1701, 26 January 1702): they had still not received the transcripts they required from the Council.

[60](#). See Thomas W. Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York, 2003).

7. THE SUICIDAL STUDENT

[1](#). The records of the case are contained in StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg. For an excellent, clear account of the case, see Kurt Rau, *Augsburger Kinderhexenprozesse 1625–1730* (Vienna, Cologne, and Weimar, 2006), 240–70. Rehlinger was a patrician who had become one of the *Bürgermeister* in 1676; he resigned that office in 1682 but held other important offices until his death in 1698 (see StadtAA, Benedict von Paris, *Besetzung aller Ämter in der Reichsstadt Augsburg angefangen Anno 1548 fortgesetzt und beendet bis zur Auflösung der reichsstadtischen Verfassung Anno 1806*).

[2](#). “Caspar” was a common name for the Devil (see Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* [London and New Haven, 2004], 231–32).

[3](#). Sigmund Freud, “Eine Teufelsneurose im siebzehnten Jahrhundert,” *Gesammelte Werke*, 13:317–53; and it also appears in the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols., ed. James Strachey in cooperation with Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, and Alan Tyson et al. (London, 1953–74), 19:72–105.

[4](#). The works of Norbert Schindler, Hans Medick, and Valentin Groebner are among the notable exceptions. This essay has been considerably influenced by the work of Alf Lüdtke. See, in particular, Alf Lüdtke, *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg, 1993), esp. 9–14, 136–60; “War as Work: Aspects of Soldiering in Twentieth-Century Wars,” in *No Man’s Land of Violence: Extreme Wars in the 20th Century*, ed. Lüdtke and Bernd Weisbrod (Göttingen, 2006); Introduction: “What Is the History of Everyday Life and Who Are Its Practitioners?” and “What Happened to the ‘Fiery

Red Glow'? Workers' Experiences and German Fascism," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Lüdtke; trans. William Templer (Princeton, 1995).

5. Marc Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550–1750* (Cambridge, 2001).

6. Trevor Johnson, *Magistrates, Madonnas and Miracles: The Counter Reformation in the Upper Palatinate* (Aldershot, 2009).

7. Howard Louthan, *Converting Bohemia* (Cambridge, 2008).

8. Ruth Konstanciak, "Das Jesuitentheater in Ingolstadt," in *Die Jesuiten in Ingolstadt 1549–1773*, ed. Stadtarchiv Ingolstadt, catalogue for exhibition of the same name, 1991–92 (Ingolstadt, 1991). Some of the plays performed in the college included dramatic scenes with devils, including one play with a Faust motif; though it is more difficult to know whether these plays would have been performed during the years Karg attended. There were special "Villatagen" when the students went on excursions and rewards for good students (Beatrix Ettelt, "Das Jesuitengymnasium in Ingolstadt," *Die Jesuiten in Ingolstadt*).

9. See Stadtarchiv Ingolstadt, ed., *Die Jesuiten in Ingolstadt 1549–1773*.

10. For contemporary images of these foundations, see Host Nising, "... unseren Zwecken aufs beste angepaßt": *Die Jesuitenkollegien der Süddeutschen Ordensprovinz im 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert und ihre Darstellung in fünf Bilderzyklen* (Munich, 2003); see also *Die Jesuiten in Ingolstadt*.

11. Nising, "... unseren Zwecken aufs beste angepaßt," 152; the table probably dates from 1685 (34).

12. See Jeffrey Chipps Smith, *Sensuous Worship: Jesuits and the Art of the Early Catholic Reformation in Germany* (Princeton, 2002).

13. I am grateful to Miranda Cresswell and Ann Tlusty for help in looking at this document.

14. Indeed, the Jesuit fathers were not permitted in theory to execute punishments themselves, but delegated these to a *Zuchtmeister* (*Die Jesuiten in Ingolstadt*, 107).

15. StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 2nd interrogation, 22 August 1680, qu. 20. Francis Xavier was also believed to be helpful in exorcism, and Xavier water and other sacramentals had been used in the case of the possession of Anna de la Haye in Straubing in Bavaria. She had made a pact in her blood with a mysterious nobleman; and her liberation from the Devil was attributed to Xavier (Trevor Johnson, "Besessenheit, Heiligkeit und Jesuitenspiritualität," in *Dämonische Besessenheit. Zur Interpretation eines kulturhistorischen Phänomens*, ed. Hans de Waardt, Jürgen Michael Schmidt, H. C. Erik Midelfort, Sönke Lorenz, and Dieter R. Bauer [Bielefeld, 2005]).

16. Indeed, by naming them he was trying to get them interrogated, too.

17. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven and London, 1990), 141; see also 18–19, 156–82.

18. On "spiritual physic," see David Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe: The Bavarian Beacon* (Cambridge and New York, 2006).

19. The Jesuit priest he was granted, Father Jacob Wyll, wrote a formal intercession along with the Franciscan Georg Prandtmyer and the assistant priest

at the Cathedral on his behalf once the punishment was known (StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 7 September 1680). They adduced his youth, lack of understanding, and mentioned in particular that he rued his crimes “in bitterkheir seines herzens” and had never shown “einige merkhliche halßstarrige bosheit zeitt seines gefangenschafft, Wohl aber ein demüetig gehorsame vnderwerffung der hochobrigkeitlichen verordnung bezaiget.”

[20](#). Karg was certainly not unique in behaving in such a fashion in interrogation: Juditha Wagner, in a case in 1689, also saw the Devil while she was being questioned, hiding by the oven (StadtAA, Urg. 1689, Juditha Wagner).

[21](#). See Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe*, 310, esp. n. 98; Soili-Maria Olli, “The Devil’s Pact: A Male Strategy,” in *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (Manchester, 2004); Devid Lederer, “Pact with the Devil,” *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition*, ed. Richard Golden, 4 vols. (Santa Barbara, 2005), vol. 3.

[22](#). Rau, *Kinderhexenprozesse*; for Lutzenberger, see also StadtAA, Strafbuch des Rats 1654–1699, p. 136, 22 March 1661 and Urg. 1661, Johannes Matthias Lutzenberger. For Regina Schiller, see Roper, *Witch Craze*, 187–88. Georg Habrick of Prague had been accused in Augsburg of having an understanding with the Devil and practicing diabolic arts back in 1652; he was aged fifty (StadtAA, Strafbuch des Rats 1635–53, p. 354, 4 April 1652); three years later the eighteen-or nineteen-year-old Franz Klett from Salzburg and the twenty-or twenty-one-year-old Augustin Gerstäcker faced even more serious accusations that they had not only become involved with the Devil but that Augustin had committed sodomy both with the stable-boy Andreas Franck and with the Devil (Strafbuch des Rats 1654–99, p. 201, 9 April 1665). Franck had sensibly fled town. Augustin was lucky. He managed to withstand several bouts of severe torture (far more serious than that Karg was to endure) and so, with the case unproven, he was returned home to his parents (Strafbuch des Rats 1654–99, p. 203, 5 May 1665).

[23](#). Rau, *Kinderhexenprozesse*, 280–93; StadtAA, Urg. Anna Juditha Wagner, 1689, see interrogation of Jacob Schmidt, 7 March 1690; 11 March 1690; 22 March 1690; Strafbuch des Rats 1654–99, p. 604, 30 March 1690. The public proclamations of their crimes, of course, also provided another source of knowledge; and it is interesting that several details recur in the cases.

[24](#). Christoph Ehinger, *Daemonologia oder etwas neues vom Teufel* (Augsburg, 1681); he was pastor at Hl. Geist in Augsburg and is probably not the “Christoph Ehinger” to whom Karg was sent for advice about conversion, because he is described by the scribe who noted Karg’s confession as Helper at Hl. Kreuz (StadtAA Urg. 1680, Veit Karg). Almost certainly, the man to whom Karg was sent was not Christoph but Johannes Ehinger, the assistant at Hl. Kreuz. See Horst Jesse, *Die Geschichte der evangelischen Kirche in Augsburg* (Pfaffenhofen, 1983). Gottlieb Spitzel, *Die gebrochne Macht der Finsternuß ...* (Augsburg, 1687).

[25](#). Roper, *Witch Craze*, 186–87. There is an etching of Aviano with the caption “Durch welchen Gottes hand gross wunder hat gethan / Alles anligen, ia Teuefell muessen weichen / Durch hand auf legen und H. Creitz zeichen” (Staatsund Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod. Aug. 127, fols. 252r, 255v, 262r).

[26](#). For critical readings of Freud's analysis, see Michel de Certeau, "What Freud Makes of History: 'A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis,'" in *The Writing of History*, by Certeau (New York, 1988); Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe*, 306–21; H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Charcot, Freud and the Demons," in *Witches, Werewolves and Wandering Spirits*, ed. Kathryn Edwards (Kirkville, 2002), 199–215; H. C. Erik Midelfort, "Catholic and Lutheran Reaction to Demonic Possession in the Late Seventeenth Century: Two Case Histories," *Daphnis* 15 (1986): 623–48.

[27](#). Certeau, "What Freud Makes of History."

[28](#). I suspect that this question (ibid., 300–305) is just the question of the sense in which psychoanalysis is a meta-discourse. It seems to me that we always have to take a vantage point when we apply theories of any kind. When Certeau moves finally to argue that Freud gets out of being a "law" by systematically using "risk" and interpretative intuition in psychoanalysis, I think he confuses Freud's teasing rhetorical style with his epistemology. Freud does not give up the idea that there is a theory of the mind which can be used, nor is it a matter of intuition and risk what interpretation we use; for this must always be tested against the patient and his or her improvement (and this is not just the patient's language, as Certeau refers to it). What makes these "excursions" into history different is that in these cases we can't ultimately apply this test.

[29](#). Freud translated "parens" as referring to Haizmann's father, but has been convicted of error because the Latin term is gender neutral and may refer to his mother. However, there are good arguments for Freud's rendering (see Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe*, 110), and in any case, this is not the only interpretation offered (see Midelfort, "Catholic and Lutheran Reaction to Demonic Possession in the Late Seventeenth Century: Two Case Histories," *Daphnis* 15 [1986]: 623–48).

[30](#). He was to be instructed in the faith by the Praeceptor "Esaias," and had apparently attended several times (StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 1st interrogation, qu. 74).

[31](#). StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 5 June 1680, statement of Maria Schwaihofer.

[32](#). StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 3rd interrogation, 29 August 1680; von vngebürlichem Zuehalten mit dem besen feindt herrüere.

[33](#). In der eisen, aber vor seiner verhafftung. Wol aber seye wahr dz Er Ihme wie vor gemelt als ein Mann erschienen, vnd Jhme versprochen zuem dritnmahl er wolle Jhme hinaus helffen wan Er sich wirklich vndterschreiben werde, Da Er aber gar oft gefragt worden auß was Vrsach Er dieses so lügenhafft vorgeben, sagt Er, er habe vermeindt man werde solchem glauben zustöllen + vnd Jhme desto genedigers Vrtheil wider fahren lassen + vnd vermeindt es gelte eben gleich wan Er Jhme erschienen, er sage alsdan in gestalt einer Junfrau oder eines Manß, ... da dises gar nicht reime, sonder Er müsse was anders dahinder gehabt haben. Vnd was dan selbes seye? (StadtAA, Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 3rd interrogation, 29 August 1680). In this context, "a more merciful verdict" may mean execution rather than burning, which was the penalty for witchcraft and for sodomy; usually the Augsburg authorities did employ this "merciful punishment" as they termed it in cases of

witchcraft.

[34](#). In the case of Augustin Gerstäcker back in 1665, sodomy with the Devil had been one of the accusations (see n. 22 above).

[35](#). Interestingly, during the main interrogation he confessed instead that one possible reason for the swellings might be what “Er mit den S.V. huern zu Oberhausen gethan, in deme Er dz Mensch 3 oder 4 mahl nach einander misbraucht habe,” going on to beg for a merciful death and saying that he wanted to suffer death for his sins — an overreaction if all that was at stake was repeated sex with whores. “Misbrauchen” is also a strong word to use in this context, and sounds more like some kind of unnatural sex.

[36](#). He acted as an assistant to a priest, and then worked for a judge in Sandersdorf in Bavaria, where he pilfered money from the desk. Confronted by his master, he confessed and promised to repay it. Once again, Karg evaded formal prosecution: his master imprisoned him and was considering pressing charges, but Karg escaped. The butcher’s wife from whom he had stolen in Ingolstadt did not press charges once she had got her money back, nor did she even tell the Jesuits. Karg seems to have been able to elicit kindness even from those against whom he had offended.

[37](#). Scott, *Domination*, ix–x, 18, 19; note the use of “choke back.”

[38](#). Lederer, *Madness, Religion and the State in Early Modern Europe*, esp. 111

[39](#). Roper, *Witch Craze*.

[40](#). They did ask the authorities in Ingolstadt about the seduction by the students as an afterthought (it is inserted as an addition by the scribe) (StadtAA Urg. 1680, Veit Karg, 4 June 1680), but this was not pursued.

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